Investigating the Understanding and Implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand Primary School

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Abstract

In New Zealand, the education system has underserved Māori learners for many years, with various factors contributing to this underperformance. Many of these factors stem from racism and bias, conscious or unconscious, inherent in our system (Ministry of Education, 2019b). Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) set about to make transformative change in schools. This research presents an investigation into the understanding and implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand primary school.

The research was guided by culturally responsive methodologies, bringing together both kaupapa Māori and critical theories (Berryman, 2013b). Participants' understandings and how these understandings transferred into their practice was determined through a case study. The rich information generated within the case was analysed using grounded theory. The main source of information came from interviewing the management team and teaching staff members. As an insider/outsider researcher and also a participant, some of my information came from my own observations and knowledge of the school. Some attendance and achievement data held by the school also informed the case.

The Office of the Auditor-General (2016b) contended that Ka Hikitia was a well-worded policy but, due to a lack of understanding of the policy in many schools, it was poorly implemented nationwide. In this school, despite the good leadership and hard-working teachers, staff had difficulty fully understanding and therefore implementing the Ka Hikitia strategy as it was intended. Strong relationships between teachers and students were evident throughout the study, however, stronger relationships were needed between the school and the wider Māori community. The research shows that, despite the good intentions of the teachers, to fully implement the intent of Ka Hikitia, educators need to be committed to te ao Māori.

The Ministry of Education plans to relaunch a further iteration of Ka Hikitia this year, supported by another initiative, Te Hurihanganui. For this iteration to be successful, more effective implementation systems are required that will enable Māori students to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori.

For Mum, Craig, Tom, Sam and Kate

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Ehara taku toa i te toa takitini, Engari he toa takitini.

Success is not the work of one but the work of many.

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Investigating the understanding and implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand primary school

Chapter One - Introduction

Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear,
take care of what they see, take care of what they feel.
For how they grow, so will be the shape of Aotearoa.
Dame Whina Cooper

"Every child in New Zealand deserves to thrive physically, academically, socially, and culturally" (Provost, 2016, p. 6), regardless of ethnicity. There are many talented and committed educational professionals working extremely hard towards this goal, however, there are still Māori students with untapped potential who disengage from education before they gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how a New Zealand full primary school is responding to the government strategy Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Through discussions, interviews, observations and my knowledge of the school, I will investigate the teaching and management team's understandings and implementation of the vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia. Planning and data will be examined to see how Ka Hikitia is incorporated into the school documentation. The enablers and barriers for the school to implement this strategy will be identified to determine the overall implications of implementing Ka Hikitia as recommended by the Ministry of Education.

Research Questions

In terms of the Ka Hikitia Māori strategy, in what ways do the management and teaching staff:

- Understand the vision statement and the guiding principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a);

- Incorporate the vision and principles into school planning and data collection, and therefore;
- Implement the strategy as it is recommended by the Ministry of Education?

What are the overall implications of this?

Justification

Although many Māori students have been successful in education, a significant disparity in the achievement of Māori and non-Maori students continues to show in research and data, even though improving Māori student achievement has been a priority for the Government for over two decades (Education Review Office, 2010; May et al., 2019). Māori learners have been underserved in New Zealand's education system, with many factors contributing to this underperformance. Although the causes and solutions continue to be debated, the Ministry of Education (2019b) suggests racism and bias is inherent in the education system. This includes negative bias in teacher judgements, low expectations of Māori students, devaluing of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge and wisdom) and te ao Māori (Māori world view), as well as poor access and knowledge te reo Māori (Māori language) (Ministry of Education, 2019b). Myles Ferris, president of Te Akatea – New Zealand Māori Principals Association, agrees that racism exists in our schools, and suggests that schools are the first place to start if we are to rid it from our society (Croskery, 2019).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) strategy 'Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013-2017' was intended to guide action, to make a significant difference for Māori students in education (2013a). This strategy provided a framework for educators, to raise the education system performance for Māori students. New Zealand schools are expected to be working towards the vision outlined in this document and practising the underpinning principles. This study aims to find out how a New Zealand full primary school is responding to Ka Hikitia - Accelerating success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

The education gap between Māori students and their non-Māori peers has been identified and analysed. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 report, indicated that Māori achievement in reading, mathematics and science was

on average, poorer than for other students (May, Jang-Jones, & McGregor, 2019). There have been several MoE initiatives provided to improve outcomes for Māori students, and extensive research on the outcomes of these initiatives, however, most of these have been aimed at secondary schooling. This study will look to investigate and understand the way the Ka Hikitia strategy has been implemented in a full primary school.

Interested Parties

The findings from this research will be of significant value to the education of New Zealanders. The MoE document Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 is designed to "guide and measure quality education provision for and with Māori students and their whānau" (2013a, p. 8). The findings of my research will be of interest to all education policymakers, teachers and researchers investigating Māori student achieving education success, as they will be informed of how this document is being understood and actioned in a New Zealand full primary school. It will also serve to encourage educators to examine their own understandings of Ka Hikitia. In particular, this research will be of interest to this school's Board of Trustees, the principal and management staff. It may be used to inform the future vision for the school and identify areas of strength as well as any weaknesses. These could then be addressed with school policy and professional development. Perhaps most importantly, the party that stands to gain the most are the Māori students, who would be able to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori, as when this vision is achieved, all Māori students will:

- Have their identity, language and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success.
- Know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success.
- Experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive.
- Have gained the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success in te ao Māori, New Zealand and the wider world.
  (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 12)

This is summed up by the Ministry of Education (2009a) who advocate that the positive impact of 'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori' will not only be significant for students but also their whānau, the wider community and New Zealand as a whole. For the good of New Zealand, more needs to be done to change this, as "the success of New Zealand depends on Māori success, and the success of Māori depends on their success as Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2019e).

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Nōreira, atawhaitia ngā rito, kia puāwai ngā tamariki.

Ako i ngā tamariki, kia tu tāngata ai, tātou katoa.

Therefore, cherish and nurture the shoots, so the children will bloom.

Learn from and with these children, so that we all can stand tall

Introduction

The achievement gap between Māori and non-Māori is well known and is closing, however, progress is too slow (Provost, 2016). This literature review focuses on the Ka Hikitia strategy (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a) put in place to improve education outcomes for Māori students and explores why it was needed. The vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) are examined, along with the two critical factors essential to the success of Ka Hikitia (Alton-Lee, 2015). Ka Hikitia is then evaluation. Underpinning Ka Hikitia is the kaupapa Māori theory and critical theory (Freire, 2005; G. Smith, 2003). These are presented, along with the notion of critical consciousness (Sleeter et al., 2004). The literature concludes with exploring education disparity (May et al., 2019) by considering the notion of education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006), and the view that education is part of the fabric of society.

Context for Māori Policies and Initiatives

The MoE acknowledge "too many Māori students are left behind and disengage from education before gaining the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed to reach their full potential" and this has caused a significant negative impact on students, their whānau (extended family) and the wider community (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 5). The Education Review Office (ERO) (2010) recognised the critical importance of educators to support and develop the "inherent capabilities and skills that Māori students bring to their learning" (p. 1). The MoE has tried to address these issues with educational policies and strategies such as Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008 - 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2009a) and Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), with limited success.

Ka Hikitia Strategy

The MoE set the direction for improving how the education system performed for Māori students with the introduction of Ka Hikitia – Managing Success 2008 - 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2009a). These principles, priorities and foundation for change were refreshed and relaunched as; Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) where the focus was on accelerating the system performance, to ensure every Māori student achieved their potential as Māori. Ka Hikitia provided a framework for action and highlighted the elements required to support Māori students to gain the skills, qualifications and knowledge they needed while knowing who they are as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a). The vision remained the same for both Ka Hikitia strategies, 'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori' (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a). M. Durie (2003) argues the importance of Māori having access to te ao Māori and for education to help prepare Māori to live as Māori. He adds, "Being Māori is a Māori reality. Education should be as much about that reality as it is about literacy and numeracy" (M. Durie, 2003, p. 200).

Vision

A good understanding of the Ka Hikatia vision is critical to understanding and successfully implementing the Ka Hikitia initiative (Ministry of Education, 2013c). The term 'as Māori' is at the centre of Ka Hikitia. M. Durie (2003) advocates the view that "education should be consistent with the goal of enabling Māori to live as Māori" (p. 185). He adds, that this means having access to te ao Māori which includes Māori language, culture, resources, tikanga (customs) and resources (M. Durie, 2003). To realise this vision, Māori students must achieve "academic success while maintaining and enhancing their identity, language and culture" (Ministry of Education, 2013c, p. 5). Māori students will achieve education success as Māori by:

- Working with others to determine successful learning and education pathways.
- Excelling and successfully realising their cultural distinctiveness and potential.
- Successfully participating in, and contributing to, te ao Māori.
- Gaining the universal skills and knowledge needed to successfully participate in, and contribute to, Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

  (Ministry of Education, 2013c, p. 6)

To realise this vision, school management and teachers ought to be critically conscious and believe in culturally responsive pedagogy of relations. This requires teachers' to have positive classroom relationships and interactions with students and their whānau (family), built on positive, non-deficit, agentic thinking by teachers (Bishop et al., 2014). Bishop et al. (2014) indicate that this agentic thinking is essential to create learning contexts where Māori students can be themselves as Māori, and where classroom interactions and relations are based on the power of Māori students own agency as learners.

For Māori students to achieve education success as Māori, collaboration and contributions from parties in education will be required from the MoE through to the student; with Māori whānau and community (hapū, iwi and other Māori groups) being involved and contributing through the entire process (Ministry of Education, 2013c). Responsibilities will need to be distributed beginning with the MoE who will need to provide the strategy and policy leadership for Māori education success; school BOT's will need to set the direction for Māori education success in their schools; Principals will need to work to implement the direction set by the BOT; teachers will need to provide effective teaching and support for Māori learners; and Māori learners will need to work to achieve success (Ministry of Education, 2013c).

Guiding Principles

Ka Hikitia – Accelerated Success 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) incorporated five guiding principles to deliver this strategy:

- Treaty of Waitangi
- Māori potential approach
- Ako – a two-way learning and teaching process
- Identity, language and culture count
- Productive partnerships.

These principles concentrate on what evidence has shown will achieve transformational shifts in the performance of the education system for and with Māori (Ministry of Education, 2009a). They take into account that culture and education are inseparable, both in the learning setting and the education system (Bishop et al., 2003). Māori

students are more likely to succeed when teaching content and environment reflect their whānau, hapū, iwi and themselves; and they are able to be 'Māori' in all learning contexts (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is acknowledged by Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a) as a document that protects Māori learners' rights to achieve true citizenship and knowledge, as well as protects te reo Māori as taonga.

The Treaty of Waitangi was a document signed in 1840 that promised both Māori Rangatira (chiefs) and the British Crown, partnership, protection and all the benefits offered by the Crown (Berryman et al., 2018). The original intent of the Treaty was understood by many iwi as *mana ōrite*, where the responsibility of both groups was to maintain the mana of the other and understand the mana of both partners as equal (ōrite) (Berryman et al., 2018). This became New Zealand's founding document; however, debate still surrounds the interpretation of the different Māori and English versions.

The Treaty provides the context for the relationship between the Crown, iwi and Māori. To raise the performance of the education system, the Ka Hikitia initiative (Ministry of Education, 2013a) emphasises the power and value of collaboration with iwi and Māori organisations. It is part of the vision of The New Zealand Curriculum stating, "Our vision is for young people … who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). The Treaty is also a principle of The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). It acknowledges the principles of the Treaty and the bicultural foundations of New Zealand, stating, "All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and its customary systems of values and practices)" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). Wano (2014) suggests that schools should not treat the Treaty of Waitangi as something that they should do, but instead as a living document, a way of living; and normalising what is culturally valuable in a meaningful way. The Treaty of Waitangi is central to our national heritage, identity and future.

Māori Potential Approach

To achieve significant improvement in outcomes for Māori students, shifts in attitude, thinking and practice are required; the Māori potential approach provides this context (Ministry of Education, 2009a). It acknowledges that Māori students have the potential to excel and be successful (Ministry of Education, 2013a) with their culture being an asset (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Bishop (2005) claims deficit thinking is widespread in New Zealand schools, where the blame for schooling problems is shifted to the students and their home life. Whereas the Māori Potential strategy invests in strengths, opportunities and potential, shifting the focus away from deficit thinking and focusing more on successes. High expectations is a principle of The New Zealand Curriculum, it "supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of individual circumstances" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9).

Bishop and Berryman (2006) found that teachers having high expectations for their Māori students made a difference to outcomes. Traditionally, Māori children are seen by their whanau to be "inherently competent, capable and rich, complete and gifted no matter what their age or ability" and are a reflection of their ancestors (Ministry of Education, 2017b, p. 12). M. Durie (2006) believes that "all students should be able to expect the learning process will recognise their unique potential and play a constructive part in preparing them for the years ahead … [with] whānau and teacher working together to build a system around their futures, and expecting that they will succeed" (p. 11). With whānau and teachers working together and expecting students can and will succeed, the learning process for all students would recognise their unique potential and play a part in preparing them for their future.

Ako – a two-way learning and teaching process

Ako means to teach and learn. The concept of Ako is a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship, where the teacher is a partner in the learning conversation, rather than the source of all knowledge, and the child is both the learner and the teacher (Bishop, 2003; Pere, 1982). Ako is a culturally specific pedagogy, that is safe and appropriate for Māori, in a relationship where power is shared (Berryman, 2008).

The most important influence that the education system can have on good outcomes is high-quality teaching; and learning depends on the relationship between the teacher

and student, as well as the motivation of the students and active engagement by the teacher (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Ako is a way that teachers can engage in power-sharing relationships. We are reminded by Berryman et al. (2018) that "respect and courage are needed when entering into an ako relationship … [as] it involves listening beyond the words and responding to the person in front of us rather than responding to our assumptions of who they might be" (Berryman et al., 2018, p. 6). In other words, valuing the student for who they are, and building on from that (Ministry of Education, 2009a). This is important because students can make sense by what they bring to the relationship, and then share these with others (Bishop, 2003). Research has shown student achievement improves when teachers facilitate reciprocal teaching and learning (Alton-Lee, 2003). Students have much to offer educators and they want to be included in learning and teaching about things they know; "I'm Māori, they should ask me about Māori things … but they never ask" (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 76). Cummins suggests that "if teachers are not learning much from their students, it is probable that their students are not learning much from them" (2001, p. 4). Ako recognises that the student's whānau is inseparably from learning and teaching (Education Review Office, 2016). This is inherent in the concept of ako.

Identity, Language and Culture Count

Identity, language and culture is carried with us and impacts us in all we do. They influence the way we experience the world and determines how we react, therefore, it must be considered in the education setting. For Māori students to achieve the overarching vision of Ka Hikitia, means maintaining and enhancing their identity, language and culture, while achieving success (Ministry of Education, 2013c). When identity, language and culture are valued, evidence has shown that Māori students progress is considerably improved (Alton-Lee, 2015; Meyer, et al., 2010; Ministry of Education, 2013c). Inherent in Ka Hikitia is the strong link between well-being and achievement (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Identity is about who we are and what defines us, including the groups we belong to and who we represent. We can have multiple identities that can evolve and change, and for many Māori students, this will be influenced by their iwi (tribe), hapū (sub-tribe) whānau

(families) and whakapapa (genealogy) (Ministry of Education, 2013c). The identities students bring with them, greatly influence their values and interests.

Language is about communication. It includes verbal and non-verbal means to express thoughts, feelings and views, and reflects identity. For many Māori, language will be a mix of both English and Māori, including the influence of regions and dialects. Te reo Māori is recognised as taonga (treasure) under the Treaty (Ministry of Education, 2007). There are many benefits to learning te reo, not just for Māori students, but all New Zealand students. These include:

- Participating with understanding and confidence in situations where te reo and tikanga Māori predominate.
- Integrating language and cultural understandings into their lives.
- Strengthening New Zealand's identity in the world.
- Broadening employment options.

  (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 14)

Therefore, it is essential schools include te reo as part of the school curriculum. It is expected that te reo is not only being taught in New Zealand schools, but the Tomorrow's School Reform suggests that all reasonable steps should be taken to make instruction in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori available (Ministry of Education, 2019c). The language revitalisation in New Zealand schools is believed to be integral to creating a strong cultural identity and enhanced well-being for Māori students (A. Durie, 1998).

Culture is the way of being, encompassing social behaviour, attitudes and feelings. It can be passed on by people around us and enriched by life experiences. For Māori students, culture is influenced by their language and identity, and whānau are influential in passing on culture (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Kapa haka has become an important part of the cultural programme at many school's, involving a powerful and emotional combination of song, dance and chanting. It is intrinsically linked to Māori identity and culture, and the importance of people and connectedness, the vital components of whanaungatanga (family-like relationships, where active engagement in respectful working relationships can occur) (Pihama et al., 2014). Through their research, Pihama et al. (2014) found many benefits of kapa haka

in school environments, including a positive effect on well-being, improved learning outcomes, and a vehicle to revitalise and retain te reo and tikanga. It has been perceived as a safe and inclusive activity for all to engage with Māori culture (Pihama et al., 2014). Therefore, it is valuable to include kapa haka into a school programme, and with it are opportunities to demonstrate ako.

Productive Partnerships

To support Māori students to succeed, it is critical that schools effectively engage with Māori families and the wider Māori community, including hapū, iwi and other relevant Māori organisations, so together they can influence better educational outcomes for Māori (M. Durie, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2007). A productive partnership starts with the understanding that Māori students are connected to whānau and should be viewed as such (Ministry of Education, 2013a). These relationships are most effective when they are based on mutual respect and the concept of ako; where the knowledge and expertise of others are valued and built upon, towards shared student learning goals (Ministry of Education, 2009b, p. 29). The power of collaboration and the value of working closely with iwi and Māori organisations to lift the performance of the education system is emphasised in Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Critical Factors of Ka Hikitia

Along with five guiding principles, are two critical factors that have been recognised as making the biggest difference to Māori student achievement:

- Quality provision, leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance.
- Strong engagement and contribution from students and those who are best placed to support them – parents, families and whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and businesses.

  (Ministry of Education, 2013a)

The focus of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) was to drive these factors through the education system.

Quality provision, leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance

Student engagement and achievement is directly influenced by quality leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Leaders are key contributors to improving student learning quality through a variety of ways (Ministry of Education, 2012). These include modelling effective practices (Alton-Lee, 2003); leading and engaging in professional development and keeping up to date with teaching and learning theories; leading the curriculum planning, development and reviewing process; and leading changes in pedagogical practice by establishing a cycle of inquiry-based teaching, reflection and evaluation (Ministry of Education, 2012).

High-quality teaching makes the biggest difference to student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2009). Hattie (2009) adds that "teachers who are passionate about making a difference, are more likely to make a difference" (p. 243). To teach Māori students effectively, a culturally responsive and relational pedagogy must be implemented. This can be defined as a pedagogy where learners can connect new learnings to their cultural experiences and prior knowledge; in this way, cognitive levels and learning activities can be responsive to individual learners interests and abilities (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.-a). When teachers are establishing relationships with learners under Ka Hikitia, they are challenged to reflect on the focus of those relationships, to ensure cultural identity, as well as spiritual, physical and emotional well-being, are addressed (Berryman et al., 2018), as student engagement is dependent on the way teachers relate to them (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). A culturally responsive pedagogy of relations is defined by Bishop and Berryman (2006) as contexts for learning where:

- Power is shared
- Culture counts
- Learning is interactive and dialogic
- Connectedness is fundamental to relations
- There is a common vision of excellence for Māori in education

  (Berryman et al., 2018, p. 4/5).

These factors were at the forefront of the following Te Kotahitanga Effective Teaching Profile (ETP) (Bishop et al., 2003), which was developed from the narratives of Māori

students', supported by narratives of their teachers, principals and whānau. By implementing the following profile, effective teachers of Māori students create a context for learning that is culturally appropriate and responsive:

a. Positively and vehemently rejecting the deficit theory as a way of explaining Māori students' educational achievements, and
b. Knowing and understanding how to bring about change in Māori student achievement and a commitment to do so.

The ETP consisted of six observable elements:

1. Manaakitanga: Care for students as culturally located humans above all else.
2. Mana motuhake: Care for the performance of their students.
3. Whakapiringatanga: Create a secure, well-managed learning environment.
4. Wānanga: Able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori.
5. Ako: Use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners.
6. Kotahitanga: Promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievements for Māori students.

(Bishop et al., 2003, p. 95/96)

When this profile was implemented it was expected that a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations would be enacted (Berryman et al., 2018). Te Kotahitanga education reform's professional development was based on this model (Bishop et al., 2003). Positively and vehemently rejecting the deficit theory was top of the list. Regarding American schooling, Sleeter (2005) suggests "taken for granted acceptance of the deficit ideology, has been a rampant and persistent problem for a long time… therefore, empowering teachers without addressing the deficit ideology may well aggravate the problem" (p. 2). There is evidence to suggest that this is also the case in New Zealand (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The professional development programme aimed to support teachers to implement a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations in their classrooms, by incorporating these six elements; based on the non-deficit

understanding that no matter what, all students can achieve. This programme allowed teachers to reflect on their understandings and practices of Māori children's experiences. Through professional commitment and responsibility, teachers brought about change in educational achievement for indigenous and other minoritised students (Bishop et al., 2014). Outcomes for Māori were found to be significantly improved in a learning environment where culturally responsive pedagogy of relations was embedded in classrooms and across the school as part of whole-school reform (Alton-Lee, 2015).

A culturally responsive pedagogy requires interdependent teaching and learning roles that are fluid and dynamic, where students and teachers can learn from each other (ako); and where learners are provided with specific information about what has been done well and what needs to be done to improve (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.-a). Berryman et al., (2018) contend that responsive pedagogy also requires listening, where listeners are as actively engaged as the speaker, and tuned into messages, both verbal and nonverbal, deferring judgement and response until after the speaker has finished. It is during these times that opportunities are created for the sharing of knowledge (Berryman et al., 2018). When these factors are actioned, Māori students will be in a position to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Strong engagement and contribution from all who have a role to play

The success or failure of a student in education is the result of many players working together, including school and community, teachers and parents, students and peers, Māori and the Government (M. Durie, 2003). The valuable contribution of whānau, hapū and iwi must be recognised by educators, and a connection with them needs to be made; as they are key to engaging students in education, and have a valuable contribution to make in developing a local curriculum, reflecting identity, language and culture-specific to each school (Ministry of Education, 2013a). M. Durie (2006) warns that for many whānau, school contact only occurs during a crisis or problem, to fundraise, or prepare a hāngi, placing parents in a defensive position, which often leads to a deteriorating relationship with the school. Additionally, M. Durie (2006) points out, that although it is important parents are informed of concerns, it is more important that schools work with parents to identify potential and jointly construct pathways to facilitate potential to be realised. MoE (2013a) suggest educational professionals create

ways for whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations to contribute to what and how Māori students learn; and work together to provide support for their learning. This is important because it has been identified that there is a high correlation between better Māori student achievement, and schools with effective partnerships (Education Review Office, 2016). To ensure governance decisions support strong outcomes for Māori students, it is essential Māori are represented on school Boards of Trustees (BOT) (Ministry of Education, 2013a). It is important to remember that the process of learning to engage in bicultural relationships "is an iterative process, that continues as more voices become part of the conversation" (Berryman et al., 2018, p. 4).

Evaluation of Ka Hikitia

Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a) is a strategy with a lot of potential, however, with implementation problems, there have only been modest gains since launching (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b). Progress has been too slow to reduce the disparity between Māori and non-Māori, with the disparity too great and still too many Māori students leaving school with few qualifications (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b). Although Ka Hikitia has contributed to schools focussing on improving Māori student outcomes and helped create conditions for improved success for Māori students, the implementation was flawed by a slow and unsteady introduction by the MoE, resulting in a missed opportunity for it to be as effective as it could have (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b). In terms of system change, there has been little. Cummins (1986) suggests a reason for that:

> … a major reason previous attempts at educational reform have been unsuccessful is that the relationships between students and teachers and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged. The required changes involve personal redefinitions of the way classroom teachers interact with the children and communities they serve. In other words, legislative and policy reforms may be necessary conditions for effective change, but they are not sufficient. Implementation of change is dependent upon the extent to which educators, both collectively and individually, redefine their roles with respect to minority students and communities (pp. 18-19).

(As cited in Berryman et al., 2015, p. 64)

Building and maintaining strong relationships with whānau and the Māori community requires ongoing attention by schools, as not enough focus has been placed on building relationships with whānau, and some schools thought they had better relationships with whānau, than whānau thought they did (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b). Although the Ka Hikitia policy reforms are necessary, they have not been sufficient to disrupt the ongoing patterns perpetuating Māori student underachievement (Berryman et al., 2015). To drive the reform requires transformative leaders who embrace the moral imperative and refuse to tolerate the status quo, including disparity for Māori students in their school (Berryman et al., 2015). To sustain systemic change requires widespread ownership of the responsibility to use power, privilege and school position to promote social justice, not only for the benefit of students but also for society (Berryman et al., 2015; Shields, 2010). Systemic change is also needed to challenge the inappropriate use of power and privilege creating or perpetuating inequity and injustice (Shields, 2010). In regards to education for Māori, the Auditor-General's report concluded that significant improvement in Māori achievement is a realistic goal, however, the sector must do more to enable greater and faster gains for Māori students, such as:

- Share learning from better-performing schools.
- Properly implement Ka Hikita in all schools.
- Support the growth of better relationships between schools and whānau.
- Make better use of information to help improve Māori student achievement.
- Share good practices and use information collected to inform decisions and support Māori students better.

  (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b, p. 11)

To build on from Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), the most recent MoE initiative Te Hurihanganui (Ministry of Education, 2019b; Te Hurihanganui Mātanga, 2019) will likely launch later this year. It is intended to address disparity, racism and education debt. If this initiative is to have the impact required to disrupt the status quo, lessons from the Ka Hikita must be learned, especially

concerning understanding and implementation. No matter how good this new initiative might be, unless it is given the time, resourcing, and implementation requirements it needs, nothing will change. However, this initiative gives us hope for the future, that disparities and inequalities will be a thing of the past and Māori students in all New Zealand schools will be able to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

Theory behind the Ka Hikitia Strategy

The government strategy Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a) was set up to change the performance of the education system, and make a difference to Māori students, so all Māori students could be proud of who they are as Māori, and gain the qualifications, skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Ka Hikitia is underpinned by kaupapa Māori and critical theory (Berryman et al., 2015), where Māori interests and desires are central to decision making and classroom practice (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Critical consciousness is essential to bring about the desired systemic and attitudinal changes in education. These are essential elements of Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a) because through the kaupapa Māori approach and critical consciousness, a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations can be achieved. We know that when a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations is embedded in schools, it makes a difference to Māori students (Alton-Lee, 2015).

Kaupapa Māori Theory

The term kaupapa indicates the framing or structuring of the way ideas are perceived and practices are applied; the term Māori refers to the indigenous tribal groups from New Zealand; kaupapa Māori, therefore, refers to the preferences, aspirations and practices with this structure (Berryman et al., 2013b). Since Ka Hikitia is concerned with 'Māori students enjoying and achieving education success as Māori', it is essential to consider kaupapa Māori theory, when investigating the understanding and implementation of this strategy. Pihama (2015) describes kaupapa Māori Theory as a "theoretical framework that ensures a cultural integrity is maintained when analysing Māori issues" (p. 11) and engages with power relationships inherent in the history of colonisation in New Zealand. Kaupapa Māori Theory responds to the existing theories and builds on kaupapa Māori foundations, where the validity of Māori language, culture and knowledge are taken for granted (G. Smith, 2015). A holistic view of the individual

and their place within the group is called for; enabling every New Zealander to be valued, while ensuring their welfare is central to the decision-making process (Jackson, 2017). Kaupapa Māori theory comes from the base of being Māori, founded in whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori movements, and allows Māori voices to be heard in response to ongoing marginalisation of Māori knowledge; and is deliberately not set in concrete, it is an evolving theoretical framework, requiring intense reflection to develop and refine, rather than being static and controlled by a few (Pihama, 2015). Eketone (2008) and Wiri (2001) contend that kaupapa Māori Theory could be considered a localised form of critical theory, as is it is grounded in critical theory.

Critical Theory and Critical Consciousness

Critical theory can be defined as a theory that takes a critical view of society, involving an ideological analysis of society and culture, with an emphasis on sociohistorical context and emancipatory agenda and reflexivity (Chandler & Munday, 2020). It can be distinguished from traditional theory, because it is critical, as it acts as a liberating influence, working to create a world that satisfies the needs and powers of human beings. In society's quest for technological advancement, individuals, particularly the disadvantaged, have been programmed to a rigid conformity, where a new underclass has been created, and it is everyone's responsibility to react to the situation thoughtfully and positively (Freire, 2005). It is through a process of conscientisation, resistance and transformative action that we can critically examine issues of power and privilege, where we can work to challenge and disrupt traditional assumptions and work towards equity and justice for all (G. Smith, 2003). Educators who engage in conscientisation, become aware of the part they play in maintaining the status quo or inequity for their Māori learners and can begin to engage in resistance (Anderson, 2018). Critical consciousness is required to be able to take action and put critical theory into practice. When educators engage in practices focusing on more equitable reality for their Māori learners, transformative praxis can occur. Critical theory addresses equity issues and seeks to disrupt the status quo that is set up to advantage the advantaged.

The process of critical consciousness is complex, and involves awakening, reflecting, and learning from each other about issues of oppression (Sleeter et al., 2004). To raise a person's critical consciousness requires a developmental process, where they become

aware of social, economic and political systems that oppress people (Squier, 2016). This awareness is essential to lead to action against oppressive systems. Critical consciousness theory assumes that oppression is a reality world-wide and it is in the best interest of people to fight to remove it from society, as it not only frees the oppressed but also the oppressor, as oppression can be as much structural, as it is personal (Squier, 2016). Therefore to create a world that is safe and beneficial for all, people need to be critically conscious and fight against oppression. Critical consciousness is seen as a transformational process because it has the power to change the way we view our world, how people are treated, and how we relate to each other (Squier, 2016). To be able to critically understand, Freire (1992) suggests that we must also understand that the following myths are created by the oppressor to maintain the status quo:

> The myth that the oppressive order is a 'free society'; the myth that all men [and women] are free to work at whatever they wish. The myth that this order respects human rights. The myth that anyone who is industrious can become an entrepreneur. The myth of the industriousness of the oppressor, and the laziness and dishonesty of the oppressed. The myth of the universal right to education (pp. 135-136).

Kaupapa Māori Theory could be considered a localised form of critical theory, as is it is grounded in critical theory. The frameworks may be different, however, both theories challenge dominant systems of power.

Identifying Racism in Education Systems

It has been identified that racism exists in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 2019b). To improve educational outcomes for all students, racism in the education system must be addressed (Ministry of Education, 2019b). When individuals exercise critical consciousness they explore questions related to human dignity, freedom, authority, social responsibility and personal purpose. (Squier, 2016). Freire (2005) proposes that to achieve critical consciousness and to engage in authentic transformation of reality, requires humanizing men and women, which will result in enriched lives for all. There is an awareness among educators, that education may perpetuate inequalities and injustice. The challenge is to get educators to critically engage in such issues, that they would prefer to avoid because it is only by critically

engaging that critical consciousness will develop. Through education, students should be helped to engage in transformative actions and to achieve a critical understanding of their own reality (Sleeter et al., 2004). This requires facilitation by critically conscious educators. Sleeter et al. (2004) go on to suggest disrupting the pattern of the dominant ideology, that teaches young people to "accept and take for granted certain perspectives, and to view questions about issues such as racism and poverty to be impolite." (p. 93). Through working with tertiary students, Sleeter found her students were challenged when working to answer a 'why' question they did not understand during an inquiry into sociocultural issues related to race, gender, social class, or disability; as they had realised they had learned to dismiss perspectives that challenged their own and not to listen to people from historically marginalized groups (Sleeter et al., 2004). It was through challenging their perspectives and interpretations that students began to engage in transformative actions, highlighting the importance of educators to be agents of change and the belief that transformative pedagogy is required (Sleeter et al., 2004).

The lack of attention by the MoE and the teaching profession, to racial bias, manifested in macro and microstructures in mainstream education, have undoubtedly contributed to the challenges faced by ethnically marginalised students (Kidman et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2016). Racial bias in institutional structures could be examined using critical theory as a framework. Frideres (2015) suggests that the concept of colour-blindness is central to this theory, and can be described as "a white resistance to seeing issues of race" (cited in MacDonald & Reynolds, 2017, p. 48). MacDonald and Reynold (2017) go on to warn that:

> The ability to remain colour-blind is integral to racial oppression because harmful historical grievances are swept away by the belief that equal opportunities exist for everyone in society, thus making transparent white supremacy (p. 48).

Colour-blindness is a form of racial silencing and is defined as "the denial of the meaning of effects of race" (MacDonald & Reynolds, 2017, p. 48). It is time to address disparities that exist in the education sector and call out racism. Until that happens, racial bias and undercurrents will continue and the disadvantaged will continue to be disadvantaged, while the advantaged will continue to be advantaged.

President of Te Aketea (New Zealand Māori Principals Association) Myles Ferris said that the association constantly received feedback, supported by evidence, that racism is experienced by Māori students and their whānau, impacted on their achievement (Croskery, 2019). The impacts of such racism and unconscious bias on educational outcomes for Māori students' causes considerable concern, and Boards of Trustees (BOT) are required by the Government to take all reasonable steps in their schools to eliminate it (Ministry of Education, 2019c). The New ZealandHuman Right's Commission has a national campaign to create conversations around racism. Hate is encouraged in environments that endorse it, even in passive ways (Hoskin & Hunt, 2019). The Government is supporting schools and communities to address racism and unconscious bias with initiatives such as Te Hurihanganui (likely to be released in 2020) (Ministry of Education, 2019c) and the Teaching Council's project; *Give Nothing to Racism* (Hoskin & Hunt, 2019). Society teaches us where we fit, who belongs, who is to be feared, who is superior and who is less. These messages can be almost indiscernible but can feed racism. Racism is woven into the fabric of New Zealand society and to rid it from our society, school is a good place to start (Croskery, 2019).

Achievement Disparity

Our education system plays a central role in remedying the residual social and economic inequalities while embracing New Zealand's unique bicultural heritage (May et al., 2019). The disparity between the achievements of Māori students and other ethnic groups in New Zealand is widespread throughout New Zealand schools (May et al., 2019). A disproportionately high number of Māori students are leaving school with few formal qualifications (Kidman et al., 2013), excluding them from participating equally in New Zealand society. The Māori Advisory and Reference Group look at this gap as a "measure of debt that has accumulated in our education system over many years" (Berryman et al., 2016b, p. 4) and we are reminded of the way debt is shared:

> "Like the household that has too much debt everyone shares in some way in the cost of that debt. And like the household that reduces its debt, everyone will share in the benefits" (Berryman et al., 2016b, p. 5).

A variety of government initiatives have been developed and implemented to reduce the achievement gap (debt) with little success.

Education Debt

The achievement gap is widely spoken about in the education arena. It refers to the disparities in standardised test scores between ethnic groups. Ladson-Billings (2006) argues that this focus is misplaced, instead we should be looking at the education debt that has accumulated over time. Professor Robert Haveman of the University of Wisconsin defines education debt as:

> The foregone schooling resources that we could have (should have) been investing in (primarily) low-income kids, which deficit leads to a variety of special problems (e.g. crime, low productivity, low wages, low labour force participation) that require ongoing public investment.
>
> (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 5)

The achievement 'gap' is visible and able to be measured and reported. The challenge is to recognise the education debt, as it is less able to be measured or defined (Berryman & Eley, 2017b). Wolfe and Haveman (2001) suggest that when assessing the full impact of education, the intergenerational effects are generally neglected in the literature (cited in Ladson-Billings, 2006). It is important to understand the education debt we have in New Zealand because until we understand it, we are unable to attend to it. Ka Hikitia is an initiative put in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for Māori students, but without proper understanding and implementation, it is unlikely that it will impact as it is intended.

Fabric of Society

The fabric of society refers to the structure or framework that makes up society, that everyone is part of, including our customs, beliefs and interrelationships. Values, wealth, ethnic composition, education and employment are combined to create the social fabric. The fabric of society, which the education is a part of, has deeply embedded systems and processes serving to perpetuate disparities and inequities. The state of our education system has a direct correlation to the fabric of our society.

Therefore, having a fair and equitable education system enhances the fabric of our society and conversely, an unfair or inequitable system weakens it.

Achievement disparities between specific groups of students have been well documented within mainstream New Zealand schools (May et al., 2019), although a number of MoE initiatives have been put in place, little has been achieved to improve these disparities (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b). Low equity education systems are underserving New Zealand students. This was highlighted in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, where on average Māori students achieved poorer academic results than other groups, increasing the risk of students leaving school lacking qualifications and having difficulty gaining well paid, full-time employment (May et al., 2019). The fabric of society becomes one where particular groups are seen to have the necessary skills and qualities to benefit from all society has to offer, while other groups do not.

Our society is set up to advantage the advantaged. To address these equity issues requires conscientisation, beginning with understanding power and privilege, and the inappropriate use of it (G. Smith, 2003). All educators have a role to play in challenging these inequalities, for transformative praxis to occur. Attitudes and actions in our education system have a direct influence on what happens in society. Educators have a responsibility to respond with critical consciousness.

"Woven into the very fabric of our educational system is an underlying racism that persistently and perniciously disadvantages Māori students" (Berryman & Eley, 2019, p. 991). Culturally responsive pedagogy of relations can provide a critical space from which the fabric of society can begin to change (Siope, 2013).

Chapter Summary

This literature review has highlighted the vision and five guiding principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), along with the two critical factors for success. The Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a) strategy has a lot of potential, however, in evaluating Ka Hikitia, the Auditor-General's report, suggested that there were implementation issues (Office of the Auditor-General,

2016b). The report also emphasising what could be done differently going forward to improve the likelihood of success.

The purpose of this research was to find out what ways the management team and teaching staff in a full primary school in New Zealand, understood the vision statement and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), and how they incorporated these into school planning, and therefore; implemented the strategy as it is recommended by the Ministry of Education. Followed by finding out what the overall implications were. The following chapter will outline the methods and methodologies I used to undertake this research.

Chapter Three – Methodology and Methods

Me mahi tahi tātou, mo te oranga o te katoa.

We must all work as one, for the well-being of all.

Introduction

This study aims to ascertain what the management team and teachers at a full primary school understand by the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a); and how they incorporated these into the school planning; and therefore implement the strategy as recommended by the MoE. This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used in this research. This qualitative study was viewed through the interpretivist paradigm. It was underpinned by culturally responsive methodologies and critical theory and my position as an insider/outsider researcher is explained. Case study was the method used, with some attendance and achievement data held by the school also informed the case. The actions leading up to the research, including the procedure for recruiting participants, participant involvement, ethical considerations, and anonymity and confidentiality are outlined. With the information largely gathered through interviewing, grounded theory was applied for analysis. The limitations of the study are acknowledged and explored, along with an explanation of how these might be mitigated or used to an advantage in this study.

Research Paradigm

The research design involved having a clear focus on the research questions, considering the purpose of the study, the information required to answer the questions and the best strategy to obtain that information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a). The paradigm for this research is interpretive, in a qualitative study, as it is situated in the empirical world, connected to a specific group of people, and involved relevant interpretive material (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a). An understanding is gained by interpreting the subjective experiences of the participants. An interpretivist perspective acknowledges "multiple meanings with findings that are observer-dependent" (Yin, 2014, p. 17), by attempting to "interpret or make sense of the meaning people attach to their experiences" (Mayan, 2009, p. 11). Therefore, this research comes from an interpretivist epistemology as

through dialogue I discovered the participants' knowledge and understandings of Ka Hikitia. This research required an understanding of participants reality by interpreting their subjective experiences. A grounded theory analysis tool will be used.

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the processes and methods used to gain the required knowledge, to answer research questions (Creswell, 2012). This research was guided by culturally responsive methodologies, bringing together both kaupapa Māori and critical theories (Berryman, 2013b). By applying the kaupapa Māori approach, a cultural lens was used to interpret the findings, because culture and relationships matters.

The methodology used was qualitative, where the world is viewed subjectively and phenomenon can be interpreted because people's thoughts and opinions are valid 'ways of knowing' (Yin, 2014). My research method was a case study as it allowed me to understand the world as it was from the subjective experiences of the participants. Some participation and accomplishment information held by the school additionally educated the case.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research involves the studied use of empirical materials such as case studies, personal experience and interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a). So participants' views are not restricted, open-ended interview questions are used to gather information (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, Creswell points out that qualitative samples of participants views, ideas, thoughts and interpretations, are carefully and purposely selected to best understand a phenomenon, to develop a detailed understanding and useful information, rather than randomly selected as in quantitative studies.

The key information source for this research was primarily gained using a qualitative approach (case study), through face to face interviews with management and teaching staff members. Individual and focus group interviews were conducted. Through this process, the aim was to ascertain participants' understanding of the vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), as well as their delivery practice.

A case study method is useful when studying a phenomenon, as it provides in-depth case information, a description and an understanding of people's personal experiences of phenomena; as well as being responsive to local conditions, situations and participants (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). To analyse the information generated in this case, grounded theory was used to generate an "explanatory theory about a phenomenon" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20).

Part of the qualitative research included a discussion of school held data, but no separate analysis of this data was undertaken and is therefore included as part of the qualitative information.

Culturally Responsive Methodologies

Culturally responsive methodologies offer an alternative framework that challenges all forms of traditional research models that devalue or dehumanize participants, instead, encouraging a research stance where "respectful relationships with participants is central to human dignity and the research" (Berryman et al., 2013b, p. 1). Culturally responsive researchers work *with* others, rather than conducting research *on* another, in an attempt to equalize power between researcher and participants while working collaboratively through the research process (Berryman et al., 2013b). Berryman et al. (2013b) suggests that while conducting culturally responsive methodologies, the researcher must resist self-interest and superiority, and instead take a stance to promote humility, humanity and empathy toward the participants. Kaupapa Māori is a "movement of self-determination towards the revitalisation and regrowth of traditional indigenous practices and ways of theorising" (Berryman, 2013c, p. 264), and kaupapa Māori theory is incorporated into culturally responsive methodologies. This case study was approached using culturally responsive methodologies and involve dialogue and conversations, viewed through a cultural lens. The cultural toolkits participants brought with them to our discussions were recognised and valued.

Kaupapa Māori Research

Kaupapa Māori research is an indigenous approach to research. Bishop (1999) explains that the main focus of the kaupapa Māori approach is the "operationalisation of self-determination (tino rangatiratanga) by Māori people" (p. 2). Furthermore, kaupapa Māori research is orientated towards benefiting all the research participants and their

collective agendas that define and acknowledge Māori aspirations, by building relationships based on mutual respect (Bishop, 1999). Kaupapa Māori assumes the existence and validity of Māori language, knowledge and culture.

As a researcher, I have an obligation to enter into relationships with my participants by respectfully honouring and supporting them (Berryman et al., 2013b), by incorporating kaupapa Māori guidelines as described by Linda Smith (2000):

- Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)
- Kanohi kitea (present yourself to people face to face)
- Titiro, whakarongo & kōrero (look, listen & speak)
- Manaaki ki te tangata (be generous)
- Kia tupato kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)
- Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge) (p. 242).

Kaupapa Māori is a set of ideas that is focused on both theory and action, with roots in critical theory that are more important than many realise (G. Smith, 2012). Graham Smith (2012) warns that without critical theory, kaupapa Māori may become domesticated in education, where the mainstream group assumes a significant degree of influence over it. It is my hope, that by implementing the strategies and ideas outlined in the kaupapa Māori approach, I will be able to maintain and potentially enhance the mana of the participants.

Critical Theoretical Research

Critical theory allows critical examination of issues of power and privilege, and through doing so, works to disrupt and challenge traditional assumptions about equity and justice (G. Smith, 2003; Freire, 1972). Critical theory was important in this research, as it encouraged me, as the researcher to practice critical consciousness, keeping the welfare of the participants at the forefront. Issues of power and privilege were critically examined throughout the research process.

Critical theory and cultural responsiveness are connected. Therefore, valuing participants together with their cultural toolkits, was important in this research.

Importantly, “participants are experts of their own local knowledge” (Berryman et.al., 2016b, p. 5), and seeking parity with them is in line with critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972).

Insider / Outsider

There are multiple ways of being both an insider and outsider in indigenous contexts (Tiakiwai, 2015). Linda Smith (1999) points out that “most research methodologies assume the researcher is an outsider able to observe without being implicated in the scene” (p. 138). A researcher can be an insider as a member of the community being researched. Additionally, researchers can also be placed in an outsider position by “issues such as gender, age, cultural knowledge and linguistic ability” (Tiakiwai, 2015, p. 81). As well as ensuring quality and richness of information and analysis, Linda Smith (1999) reminds us that both insider and outsider researchers must have ways to think critically about their processes and relationships. In addition, she adds that insider researchers need to be as respectful, ethical, reflexive and as critical as outsider researchers. Furthermore, she highlights the need for the insider researcher to be humble because of their membership within the community, “with a different set of roles, relationships, status and position” (p. 140). Culturally responsive practices are a good fit for an insider researcher to adhere to. To engage in balanced mutually respectful methodologies as an insider/outsider researcher, my approach has been guided by the following questions posed by Eletreby (2013):

- How would I be able to respectfully and deeply enter into the world of the participants without being thoroughly self-conscious, self-aware, and self-reflective?
- How could I genuinely understand another unless I am fully aware of my subjectivity and how it colours my own interpretations? (p. 324)

Within this research, I am both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider because I have worked in this school for many years and currently work there part-time, so have a professional relationship with the staff. I know how the school operates and therefore, at times I will also be a participant. I am an outsider because I am currently on study leave, so am exempt from the stresses and teaching workload of a full-time teacher, with time to study and read widely, critically reflecting on issues affecting Māori students in schools today. Tiakiwai (2015) argues that the position of the insider

researcher “ensures that critical reasoning becomes a core component … because it requires constant reflection and revision of all aspects of the research process” (p. 86).

In addition to critically considering issues for Māori students, it was equally important for me to think critically about the processes used and my relationship with the participants. Keeping kaupapa Māori research guidelines, as described by Linda Smith (2000) (see kaupapa Māori research section) at the forefront, was a priority. As the research involved educational outcomes for Māori learners, there was a need for cultural sensitivities. Through my attitude and ongoing self-checking against the principles of culturally responsive research, I endeavoured to keep all relationships respectful and open to cultural and social sensitivities.

I had a potential conflict of interest, as the principal is my employer and the management team are my superiors. Potential conflicts will be addressed by keeping respectful relationships as a central kaupapa and by honouring and supporting participants (Berryman et al., 2013b), as well as incorporating kaupapa Māori guidelines.

Methods

This study is a qualitative case study, with some numeric data of attendance and achievement gathered and included, to gain a better overall understanding, within the study.

Case Study

Case studies investigate “the case in its real-world context” (Yin, 2014, p. 2). The case study method is grounded in the theoretical perspective of interpretivism and this study included individual and group interviews with some document analysis (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). As an insider/outsider researcher and also a participant, some of my information came from my observations and knowledge of the school. Mirriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.) defines a case study as “an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person or community)” (para. 1). Similarly, Cresswell (2012) suggests that case studies provide the researcher with an opportunity to explore a bounded system in-depth. This research was a bounded case study, involved educators from one school. Case studies are “intensive”, comprising more detail, richness, completeness and depth for the unit of study, than a cross-unit analysis does, stressing “developmental factors”,

as they evolve in time, “as a string of concrete and interrelated events that occur at such a time and such a place” (Flyvbjerg, 2013, p. 170).

As advised by Stake (2011), this study sought interpretive data through interviewing individuals, to gain key information to discern what they understood and how they implemented Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). My goal was to “design a good case (study), collect, present and analysis the data fairly”, as recommended by Yin (2014, p. 3). Yazan (2015) describes Yin’s style of case study as a comprehensive research strategy that is an empirical inquiry investigating cases by addressing the ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions that concern the phenomenon of interest. My research intended to find out how the educators interpreted the vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia, how they implemented the Ka Hikita strategy, and how the vision and principles were incorporated into the school planning and the implications of this.

There are advantages to the case study style of research, as it is able to investigate “complex social units consisting of multiple variables” (Behar-Horenstein, 2018, p. 1341), making it ideal for investigating the understandings of a group of individuals. Conversely, Behar-Horenstein (2018) points out some disadvantages as; considerable expenditure of time and resources; lack of guidelines for the final report; and lacking reliability and generalisability. To ensure reliability, the interviews in this study were recorded. The expenditure of time and resources were counterbalanced in this study, by the richness and in-depth information accessed through the interviews. Furthermore, as the school in this research was small, I was able to include the majority of staff at this school in my study, gaining a greater understanding of the way Ka Hikitia was understood and implemented.

Leading up to the research

Once the method and methodology had been decided upon, there were a number of steps that needed to be taken before my research could begin, such as; recruiting participants, deciding what their involvement would be; and ethical considerations including matters of anonymity and confidentiality.

Procedure for Recruiting Participants and Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research is interpretative where the researcher is typically involved in extensive experience with the participants (Creswell, 2009). Creswell warns that due to this involvement, a range of personal and ethical issues arise that need to be identified and acknowledged, as these may shape the interpretations formed during the study. Creswell (2012) emphasizes that ethical consideration and engaging in ethical practices is a critical component when embarking on research and in all steps of the research process. Before research was undertaken, ethics committee approval was sought to ensure participant protection.

Approval was then obtained from the principal to research in this school after my intentions were explained through a face to face meeting. He/she was given a copy of the information sheet (Appendix A) outlining the research project, followed by the principal consent form to sign (Appendix B). Once approval was obtained, I began by discussing the Ka Hikitia policy, at a staff meeting. Following that, teachers and management staff were invited to be part of the research.

There were ten participants, three management staff members, including the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principal (who was also a practising teacher), and seven practising teachers. At the time of this study, seven of the ten staff members had been new to the school that year, and four of them, for less than two terms at the time of the interviews. The experiences and understandings of Ka Hikitia were varied, with staff exposed to different professional development and school experiences. Participants were provided with; a letter of invitation to participate (Appendix D), an information sheet outlining the purpose and nature of the research and what their participation involved (Appendix C), and an informed consent form to sign (Appendix E), which included a commitment from the researcher regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Participation was voluntary. All data gathered during this research was kept confidential and stored securely, only able to be accessed by myself and my supervisor. As a researcher, I had a responsibility to ensure that the interests of participants were protected and that no harm could come to them as a result of being involved in the research.

Participant Involvement

To begin the research, I facilitated a staff meeting to gain an understanding of participants' prior knowledge of Ka Hikitia. Through a 'bus stop' group activity, I determined the shared understandings of the staff. This involved rotating around in small groups, writing down relevant experiences, related to the vision and each guiding principle, from either their class or the school. The second part of the activity was identifying the next steps to actioning or achieving these principles further. The recorded ideas were shared as a group. This served two purposes, firstly; getting participants to think about Ka Hikitia before the interviews, helped orientate their thinking towards their practice, giving me the best possible chance of obtaining relevant information. Secondly; to help the participants feel more comfortable in the interview process because they knew they had something to contribute. This is in line with the culturally responsive methodologies.

Following this activity, and after gaining consent from staff members, individual and group interviews began. With consent, the interviews were audio-recorded, which ensured accuracy in transcribing my notes. Before the interview, participants were given a copy of the interview questions (Appendix F or G), allowing them time to consider their responses to ensure rich data. In these interviews, participants were asked to respond to questions regarding their understandings and their classroom/school practice. After I had transcribed these interviews, the participants who were interviewed individually were given a copy of the transcripts to review for approximately two weeks with an opportunity for any amendments to be made. These participants were all happy with the transcripts, with no amendments made. Analysis began once approval of the transcripts was received.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

As participants were colleagues of the mine, participants' needed to be reassured that there would be no impact on professional relationships as a result of their participation, or if they declined to participate, or subsequently withdrew from the project. Potential conflicts of interest were mitigated by keeping respectful relationships as a central kaupapa, by incorporating kaupapa Māori guidelines for researching as described by Linda Smith (2000) and outlined in the kaupapa Māori section.

The Interviews

The interview process “enables participants… to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (Cohen et al., 2005, p. 349). Creswell (2012) asserts that it is important to use open-ended questions so the participants can “best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings” (2012, p. 218). To allow the interview to take the form of a conversation, open-ended questions were used (Burns, 2000). The interviews were audio-recorded for accuracy and transcribed into words for analysis.

Creswell (2012) points out one advantage, for using interviews in qualitative research is that it provides the researcher with useful information when direct observations are not obtainable, and it also permits the participant to describe in detail their thoughts and actions. The interviewer has control over the types of information received, because they can ask questions specifically to draw out this information. This was an advantage in my study, as through questioning, I was able to gain detailed information regarding the understandings and implementation of the vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) when observations would not have been practical. However, Creswell (2012) also points out a disadvantage is that the responses are filtered through the views of the interviewer, as the participants' views are summarised by the interviewer through the analysis. Creswell (2012) further contends that the interview data may be deceptive, by providing the perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear. Interviewee responses may not be clear and there could be inaccuracy when transcribing, so having the participants who were individually interviewed able to check their transcripts eliminated this. However, for those interviewed as a group, it was not practical for the group to reform to check the transcripts together, as required by the ethics committee, therefore I was unable to give the group transcripts to be viewed individually. These participants were informed of this prior to the interviews. Hence, I had to be certain the transcripts were accurate, which was achieved through the painstaking process of rechecking transcripts. Being aware of the potential bias and consciously being open-minded to the responses,

helped mitigate these disadvantages. For convenience, all participants chose to be interviewed on-site at school, in an enclosed room.

Five participants in this study were individually interviewed. Although individual interviews were the most time-consuming approach, it is a popular approach in educational research (Creswell, 2012). This form of interview allows participants who were articulate and confident, an opportunity to share their ideas without influence or influencing other participants.

Two focus group interviews were included in this study. One was with three management team members, as it was important to find out collectively their understandings of Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a) and how it was implemented school-wide. The other focus group was with two beginning teachers who chose a group interview for support. Through questioning, I was able to gain responses from all individuals in the group. Creswell (2012) suggests that these work well when interviewees are similar to and co-operate well with each other. This type of interview provided me with the opportunity to gain the best possible information from individuals who were hesitant to provide information (Creswell, 2012) and may be more likely to participate when they can add to others' responses. This type of interview can be challenging for researchers, as note-taking can be difficult and they lack control over the discussion, however, these discussions can be a rich data source (Creswell, 2012). This was mitigated by audio recording. Creswell (2012) warns that the researcher needed to exercise skill in managing the group interview, so that the individual views are extracted, rather than a dominant view influencing the other participants. It was important to value all participants contributions. During these interviews, I was able to ensure all participants had the opportunity to respond to all questions.

Document and Data Analysis

School documentation was reviewed as part of the qualitative case study, to see if the Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a) vision and guiding principles were evident in the school's planning. The school Charter, ERO report and attendance records were reviewed to gain any significant information regarding the position of Māori, compared to non-Maori students. This information was added to the knowledge gained in the interviews.

Along with effective teaching, the greatest influence on student engagement and achievement is attendance, and throughout New Zealand, Māori students are over-represented in the statistics of low attendance (Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2017a; Education Counts, 2019). Therefore, I wanted to find out how the Māori students' attendance compared to New Zealand European students' in this school. One full year's attendance data was reviewed. It was then broken down into proportions of students' attending according to the following MoE categories:

- **Regular attendance**, students attending school for more than 90%.
- **Irregular absence**, students attending between 81% and 90%.
- **Moderate absence**, students attending between 71% and 80%.
- **Chronic absence**, students attending school 70%, or less
  (Education Counts, 2019).

The MoE (2013a) reported that Māori students in English medium schools were more likely to have lower levels in numeracy and literacy than non-Māori. Because of this, a goal outlined in Ka Hikitia for Primary and Secondary education is to have "eighty-five percent of Māori students … achieving at or above their appropriate …[level] in literacy and numeracy" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 58). The ERO analysed data between 2017 and 2019 and published their findings in this school's 2019 report. This information was used to assess whether Māori in this school met expected curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy, and how they compared to New Zealand European students in this school, noting any significant findings.

Analysis

Respect was at the forefront of the interview process, ensuring cultural integrity was maintained during analysis (Pihama, 2015), in line with culturally responsive methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013b; L. Smith, 2015). In observing the kaupapa Māori approach, a cultural lens was needed to interpret the findings, ensuring the 'cultural toolkits' of all participants were valued. 'Cultural toolkits' refer to the participant's prior knowledge and experiences (Bruner, 1996). My subjectivity and position as both an insider and outsider "worked to authentically translate participants' experiences in light of my own experiences" (Eletreby, 2013, p. 325).

Grounded theory

As almost all the information gathered in this study was qualitative, grounded theory was the tool I used to analyse the information generated in this case study. The collected information and analysis, informed and shaped each other, through a developing and iterative process that was interactive, comparative, and enabled conclusions to be drawn (Charmaz, 2013). Grounded theory is often used to advance social justice inquiry, attending to inequalities, barriers and privilege, and the implications of such (Charmaz, 2013). Through the understandings and implementation of Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) in this school, potential inequalities and barriers for Māori students are highlighted. Grounded theory requires analysis to begin as soon as the data has been collected, along with coding and provisional theorising (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). The grounded theory process allows researchers to take what they observe and make general statements about emerging themes and relationships, and to theorise how they may apply in other situations (Charmaz, 2013; Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). Coding or organising data into emerging themes began after transcribing. Common themes were grouped as they emerged. Through the grounded theory process, I was able to make general statements about emerging themes and relationships, and theorise how they may apply in other situations (Charmaz, 2013; Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). The rationale for using the grounded theory approach was its ability to construct theory from information obtained and analyse using comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). To follow the grounded theory method, the literature review for this research was completed after data analysis, to limit researcher assumptions and give time to continually re-examine the coding process (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Halaweh et al., 2008). A criticism of grounded theory is that the results can be open to the possibility of error, in similar ways to other qualitative research, with one possibility being the misinterpretation of data (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). As an insider/outsider researcher, I could relate to the participants' viewpoints and was able to gain a good understanding of their responses. I was also able to clarify any confusions, through discussions in the workplace.

Limitations

There are traditional concerns regarding case study research. The greatest concern according to Yin (2014) is whether the study is rigorous enough? This can be mitigated by following systematic procedures and providing clear evidence (Yin, 2014). Audio-recordings of the interviews allowed accurate transcripts, providing clear evidence. Individual transcripts were checked and approved, with no changes being required.

The issue of bias was another factor that needed consideration in a case study (Yin, 2014). In qualitative studies, the results can be more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and more room is allowed for the researcher's subjective judgement (Flyvbjerg, 2013). However, Berryman (2013c) reminds us that "when one takes one's biases into the research process, one is taking one's complete self into the process" (p. 265), nevertheless, culturally responsive methodologies require researchers to make biases transparent (Berryman, 2013c). By being an insider/outsider researcher and through the staff meeting held prior to the interviews, my bias towards the implementation of Ka Hikita was transparent. However, I had a responsibility to the participants to respect and protect them through the interview process. They were made aware that I was employing the kaupapa Māori guidelines. Remaining respectful and neutral during the interview process, allowed participants to speak freely. Bodgan and Biklen (2007) reminds us of the importance to also remain neutral when reporting participant responses through the data analysis stage.

Case studies "are generalizable to theoretical propositions [but] not to the populations or universe" and a case study does not represent a sample, therefore, the goal with case studies is "to expand and generalize theories" (Yin, 2014, p. 21). However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) warn that knowledge produced, may not generalize to others or other settings, instead may be unique to those in the study. When analysing the findings, I did not assume that one teacher's understanding was also another's. Nor in my analysis of the information obtained in the case study, did I assume the specific findings from this school applied to every school. However, where these findings were backed up with other findings, such as in the Auditor-General's reports (Office of the

Auditor-General, 2013; 2016b), I have suggested that this could be generalised to other school populations.

Yin (2014) outlines the issues of unmanageable levels of effort, along with a large amount of documentation, making it difficult to extract relevant information. Additionally, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) highlight the time-consuming process of collecting data and analysis, compared to other methods. Although it took a considerable amount of time and effort, by coding the data into themes made the extraction of relevant information manageable during this study.

A further concern Yin (2014) points out is the 'unclear comparative advantage' in case studies, however, case studies can offer important insights, not provided by other methods. Case studies can address 'how' and 'why' questions concerning phenomenon (Yazan, 2015). This study was able to find out how educators interpret and implement the Ka Hikitia strategy into the school researched as well as find out how Ka Hikitia strategies were incorporated into planning.

Having transparency in the research process, enables the study to be replicated. It also provides an opportunity for the study to be debated, improved upon and extended (Moravcsik, 2019). Furthermore, Moravcsik (2019) suggests it as an ethical obligation to make data, analysis, methods and interpretations visible allowing for evaluation, while protecting participants anonymity. Tuval-Mashiach (2017) suggests researchers consider three questions concerning research transparency: what I did, how I did it, and why I did it? I have endeavoured to make this study transparent and replicable, by clearly identifying what I did, the method I used to do it, and the reasons why I undertook this research.

Summary

The following chapter will present the key findings from the interviews and conversations regarding the understandings of the vision and guiding principles of Ka Hikita, as well as how they were implemented in this school.

Chapter Four – Findings

He kai poutaka me kinikini atu, he kai poutaka me horehore atu, ma¯ te tamaiti te iho.

Look after the children to ensure the future strength of the people.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on finding out what ways the management and teaching staff understood the vision statement and the guiding principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), and how they incorporated these into their practice. The collective information was gathered from a variety of sources, including; interviews and conversations with the management team and teaching staff, some attendance and achievement data held by the school, and my knowledge gained from working in this school for ten years. The participants were interviewed individually or as a group, as outlined in chapter three. During these interviews, all members were encouraged to contribute their ideas and views, to determine their understandings.

Of the eight classroom teachers interviewed, six were new to the school, three of whom started during the year, with one teacher only being at this school a few weeks at the time of the interview. Because of this, when reflecting on their teaching practice, some teachers spoke about their practice in their previous schools.

In 2019, the ERO found the school in this research to be working toward equitable and excellent outcomes for all students and accelerating learning for some Māori students. However, significant disparity remained for Māori students in writing and mathematics. The next step suggested by the ERO was to embed school practices and processes to reduce disparity in achievement for Māori boys in all areas and Māori girls in writing and mathematics. 'Ka Hikita' means stepping up the education system performance to ensure Māori students can enjoy and achieve education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a). For this school to 'step up' and reduce disparity for their Māori students, the Ka Hikitia strategy needed to be understood and implemented effectively.

Understandings and Implementation of the Vision of Ka Hikitia:

'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori.'

A strategic goal in this school was, 'Māori students are engaged in their learning and are achieving educational success with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori'. This goal is in line with the Ka Hikitia vision. However, through discussing the Ka Hikitia vision statement with the management team, it was evident that they had some awareness of the meaning, although they were not completely clear or confident with their understanding:

> *"[Students] are enjoying being here … [their] attendance, and engaging in their education … I think we need to recognise the whole child, rather than just reading, writing and maths as a success. I think we need to work out what it means, I don't know. That's just my interpretation."*

The management team and all staff were confident understanding the meaning of 'enjoying and achieving educational success', however, most were unsure of the term 'as Māori' and management were unsure what they should be doing to ensure this vision was implemented in the school:

> *"I find it interesting with the critical factors, I think that's really cool to have those, but how? How? Because it still doesn't give us the how. I think the how is different in every place. But … yeah, it's tricky."*

Although this statement has created some confusion, throughout this chapter, you will see that this vision is being addressed to some degree, through the five guiding principles of Ka Hikitia. The management team agreed that they require some professional development to better understand this statement and its application to their school.

Three teachers' felt confident that they understood the meaning of the Ka Hikitia vision statement:

> *"Bringing in the meaning of Māori into learning. Making it more purposeful … what they hear, what they see, their cultural beliefs … If that isn't evident in their*

learning, then it's foreign. … So they feel that they belong. It's not just your whānau (family group) in your house. It's a much bigger thing."

"I think being proud [of] who they are."

Previously, one teacher had been part of a Māori Achievement Collaborative school (MACs). MACs provided professional learning with a focus on changing education outcomes for Māori students (New Zealand Principals Federation, 2020). This involved many discussions around the meaning of 'Māori enjoying and achieving as Māori', and how it looked in that school:

"For me, it's about them knowing who they are, knowing their heritage, knowing their culture, being proud of that and wanting to do best for their ancestors, their heritage… I guess it's having that connection with the community, where they're understanding what's happening in the school, and feeling a part of what is happening in the school. And contributing their thoughts, ideas, what's important, what's not … The school having that connection with the community and vice-versa."

However, over half of the teachers had difficulty understanding 'as Māori' in the vision statement, and were less confident in their understanding:

"I have problems identifying Māori in that type of sentence, 'as Māori'. Some things can be really specific to Māori students … But this, achieving educational success, is a blanket statement, that should apply to all children."

"I still don't quite understand [the statement] 'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori' … everybody should be able to achieve success, irrespective of their ethnic background … I understand the purpose of Ka Hikita, but I don't really get the phrase."

One teacher's interpretation of the vision statement was:

"… enjoying, would be that they are in an environment that they feel comfortable, happy, they've got friends, that their overall well-being is positive … Achieving in education … that doesn't have to be where they should be, as long as they are making achievements and feeling proud about what they have done."

He/she was unable to explain 'as Māori' in this vision statement. Another teacher used the words proud, happy, and positive overall well-being to describe the vision. This could cover students knowing their potential and experiencing relevant, engaging and rewarding teaching and learning; there is no mention of valuing culture, identity or language, as is essential to meet the criteria set out in Ka Hikitia to realising the vision (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

It appeared that some professional development and discussion around this vision statement was necessary, to ensure all staff members had a clear understanding. This was also essential to be able to understand and achieve the school's own strategic goal to improve outcomes for Māori.

The New Zealand School Trustees Association (2019) requires the Board of Trustees (BOT) to have a clear picture of how well Māori students are achieving in their school. They also require the BOT to focus on raising Māori student achievement and Māori achieving success as Māori (New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2019). Principals are required to provide the BOT evidence through regular analysis of data to gain an understanding of how the school is progressing. The teachers and management team at this school, clearly track Māori students' data so there is a clear picture of student achievement.

To assess students 'enjoying and achieving success as Māori', the management team felt that teachers' listened to 'student voice'. As part of the appraisal programme, the management team observed teachers in action:

> *"We get powerful student voice. We've just done some observations, and sometimes we ask the students; 'How do you think you are going in your learning?' So I think, them [students] telling us how they are feeling is a good indicator too. The data tells us one thing and it's backed up by their voice."*

Some teachers were confident that they could recognise Māori students' success in their classroom:

> *"Fostering children who are proud to be Māori, know and value their heritage, tikanga [customs], and reo [language] … recognising Māori heritage, making sure time is given in the curriculum teaching for Māori, respecting te reo, and*

tikanga, and speaking te reo so that it is normalised. The tikanga is normalised and in fact treasured. Ensuring Māori heritage and reo is embedded into whatever we are doing."

"Their confidence increases not with just their academic success, but confidence in themselves and [their] self-esteem."

Even though Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) had been in schools since 2013, many of these educators still struggled to understand the meaning of 'as Māori'. One teacher couldn't understand why any extra strategies were needed:

"I don't believe that they [Māori students] should be singled out. I think everybody should enjoy and achieve success, whether they are Māori or not."

And of course, all students should be enjoying and achieving success. However, Māori students are not achieving as well as their peers, so something needs to be done. One teacher spoke of his/her teaching pedagogy, of setting high expectations for his/her students. He/she noticed holistic changes in students when they started to achieve:

"When they see their achievements, you can actually see the satisfaction and the pride that they get from it. … They were kids that really didn't think that they could achieve anything. And when they started getting … more positive remarks back, you could actually see the physical and the mental change."

One teacher spoke of his/her enjoyment of using Māori language in the classroom, using Māori words in English sentences, such as: "I've got a sore puku [stomach]," or "go and get your kai [food]." Another teacher spoke of the importance of learning about New Zealand history and was disappointed not to have been taught it in his/her schooling. Looking at students holistically and having appropriate goals, was important to another teacher:

"I think all kids need to know … that [they] are cared for and should be safe, should be happy and should be loved… their goals should be absolutely pertinent to them."

The lack of achievement of some Māori students frustrated one teacher. He/she acknowledged land issues, but felt that colonisation was often blamed; however, he/she felt more could be done by parents to help their children:

> *"I think that Māori [whānau] need to look forward. Obviously, there are issues with land … Every culture that has had a history of war and settlement [has had that]… but [whānau should] look forward. Get your kids to school, get going! There are whole groups of people who arrived in New Zealand with nothing, and they've got there. … I think sometimes, that Māori need to have a bit more drive. … I deeply resent, that if there's a problem, it's a result of colonisation ... I think it is more complicated than that. What happened in 1840 is significant and before that, and the New Zealand wars. Those are things that are the part of history that you can't change. What you can change is the future."*

This is an example of using the deficit theory to explain Māori students achievements (Bishop, 2005), and was found to be a commonly held belief by New Zealand teachers (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). This way of thinking is not in the spirit of Ka Hikitia and was one teacher's viewpoint, and not prevalent with other staff members.

Provisions and statements for the inclusion of the Ka Hikitia vision was evident in the school planning documentation. An objective in the strategic plan stated: "Māori students are engaged in their learning and are achieving educational success with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori". However, with most of the staff having difficulty understanding the term 'as Māori', it is likely that they will have difficulty implementing this policy as it was intended.

Understandings and Implementation of Ka Hikitia Guiding Principles

Five principles guide how schools work to deliver the Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) strategy. These principles are Treaty of Waitangi; Māori potential approach; Ako – a two-way teaching and learning approach; identity, language and culture count; and productive partnerships. In this section, I will investigate the way this school responds to these principles.

Treaty of Waitangi

The power of collaboration and the value of working closely with iwi and Māori organisations to lift the education system's performance is emphasised in Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). "The Treaty provides a context for the relationship between the Crown and iwi, hāpu and whānau" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 14). It is expected that school leadership will consider the Treaty of Waitangi (Treaty) principles by building a sense of identity, as well as actively protecting and preserving the Māori language. This will play a key role in helping to build a positive and inclusive school culture, and connecting the culture of the community and whānau (Ministry of Education, 2012).

In this school, the management team suggested the Treaty was demonstrated in several ways. The use of the correct Māori pronunciation was encouraged and taught in the school. The principal has noticed that some students' will correct the pronunciation of others when appropriate.

The term Treaty was explored at the beginning of the year in all classes with the development of a class Treaty, which is an agreement, co-constructed by students' and teacher, outlining class expectations. During this study, the school year began before Waitangi Day, which had not happened for several years. Most teachers took this opportunity to teach about the Treaty at the beginning of the year to coincide with Waitangi Day. The teachers were able to support each other with resources and knowledge:

> *"At the beginning of the year [the teachers taught about] the Treaty of Waitangi. They had done a bit of background research with the children. You can hear them talking about it still [in term four], and stuff is still up in classrooms ... It made an impact. I know the senior classes weren't scared to cause debate, they didn't take a side, they wanted people to be broad-minded ... It was really powerful."*

The school collaborated with the Whānau group during preparation and celebrations of school-wide cultural events such as; Matariki, Marae visits and preparing for a school hāngi (traditional earth oven). The management team indicated that they intend to incorporate cultural events regularly, by developing a three-year cycle for tikanga,

including a marae visit, a school hāngi, and a cultural day, and had already made plans for the following year.

In line with the Ministry of Education's (MoE) recommendations, this school encouraged the correct use of Māori language, and worked with the community to include cultural activities and events, to build a positive and inclusive school culture:

> *"We still have work to be done, we definitely know that, but I believe that we are starting to take more consideration for it."*

Consulting with the community is in line with the Treaty principle in Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a). In a classroom where the Treaty is being demonstrated, Wano (2014) suggested that te reo Māori would be normalised and being used freely in the classroom for things such as instructions and greetings; students would be familiar with their pepeha (way to introduce themselves in te reo Māori) and able to share it; and waiata (to sing) would be used to tell local stories. To some degree aspects of te reo Māori were being normalised by most teachers.

Teachers spoke of ways they demonstrated the Treaty principle in their classroom. This included using Māori language, tikanga and protocols:

> *"I try and integrate [Māori language] into whatever units I'm teaching … and try to use te reo Māori instructions … in everyday things … sometimes I will do a karakia [prayer] with them before kai."*

> *"I instruct them in Māori, [as well as] asking them how they are in Māori, how they are feeling. Counting in Māori. Greetings in Māori."*

> *"I do simple commands, like 'e tu' … and … greetings as well."*

> *"… integration, if I can bring any aspects in, whether it's in maths, … [or] in the greetings at the beginning of the day, knowing about their whakapapa … and the Treaty of Waitangi, that's in the classroom. I like integrating as much as I can. And it's also in the arts, singing, visual art and storytelling through drama. I also think that because I'm not fluent in Māori, it's really important for me to have things included, and for me to pronounce things correctly and expect the same of the students."*

"We start every day in te reo … there is a big focus on the greetings and then we do a karakia and a waiata … we always make sure we talk about what that waiata is about."

Most teachers said they felt comfortable using te reo for simple commands and instructions, and incorporated these into their daily routines. Most of the classes spent time teaching about the Treaty to coincide with Waitangi Day. Several classes revisited the Treaty throughout the year:

"We have done a lot of work around the Treaty … recognising the purpose of the Treaty, and whether the government of the day and today have met those obligations … we've had quite interesting conversations around that."

"[We've had] discussions about the Treaty of Waitangi, the Waitangi Tribunal [and the] Parihaka attacks … [and] looked at a number of things around the Treaty … discussed land grabs and Crown rights. Who was in the wrong, a dynamic conversation around that!"

"I put it out to my parents, and they came in and taught [about the Treaty] for me … I had amazing lessons happening."

This demonstrated evidence of Māori community engagement in a class programme, and the way one teacher chose to connect the culture of the community and whānau. All classes participated in weekly kapa haka lessons, instructed by a specialised teacher. Through these lessons, aspects of te reo Māori and tikanga have become familiar to the students and normalised in this school. Māori waiata was a common occurrence both school-wide and in individual classrooms. There was Māori signage in most classes and some around the school; although it was acknowledged by several staff members that more Māori signage is needed in the school. Students' from some classes learned their pepeha. Several teachers mentioned the importance of setting up a classroom culture, where all students felt accepted, cared about and valued.

As required, there is evidence in the school charter that the Treaty principle is embedded in the school documentation. The Treaty of Waitangi is one of the school guiding principles, that guide the development and direction of this schools curriculum.

Māori Potential Approach

The Māori potential approach recognises that "all Māori students have the potential to excel and be successful" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 15). This approach requires more focus to be placed on, realising potential; identifying opportunity; investing in people and local solutions; collaborating and co-constructing; tailoring education to the student; and recognising indigeneity and distinctiveness (Ministry of Education, 2013a). The MoE (2013a) warns that when educational professionals hold lower expectations, it can be detrimental to learning achievement.

Realising potential

It has been found that students who expect and are expected to succeed, are more likely to succeed (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2013a). Therefore, for students to realise their potential, it is vital that teachers' have clear and high expectations for their students. The MoE (2013a) advises that it is not only teachers that must have high expectations for Māori students to achieve, but all stakeholders, including; students, whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and peers. This may mean challenging long-standing beliefs and stereotypes (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

In phase three of Te Kotahitanga, it was emphasised by Māori students that "teachers get what they expect" from their students, and students performance lifted when teachers held high expectations of them (Bishop et al., 2007a, p. 29). Several teachers in this school spoke of having high expectations for their students:

> *"My expectations for [Māori] kids was that they could, and would, and should, and will learn. So my success with Māori students was pretty damned good. But it's about that total expectation … I think there is so much to do with expectation … for me it's high expectations."*
>
> *"[Some] kids are afraid to take a risk … you've got to have that high expectation to be able to get the achievement."*

The Ministry of Education (2020) found that students who were connected to school, benefit from long-term health and wellbeing, and education outcomes. They suggest that one way of enhancing students sense of belonging and connectedness is by providing students with leadership opportunities. With only two Year 7 and 8 classes in

this school, there were many opportunities for senior students to take on a leadership role:

> *"There is an expectation that students' will be involved in leadership and that they will have a voice in their learning."*

At this school, there is a student council consisting of six students. Māori students can see that there is a leadership role for them and were well represented on the student council:

> *"Almost half my group in the student council are Māori students, in the leadership role. So they [Māori students] realise that there is a leadership role here for them and their place in it. [Student A] has stepped up a lot, being given that [a leadership role], and [Student B] as well in terms of their role as Māori leaders."*

Kapa Haka provided another opportunity for Māori students to step up and lead. To maximize potential, students must believe in themselves and their potential. "Students with a strong belief in their capacity to achieve are more likely to set themselves challenging goals and put a high degree of effort into achieving them" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 38). The management team explained that student's successes were acknowledged and shared with whānau, as it was important for students to feel proud of their achievements, and to encourage self-belief:

> *"It's celebrating those successes with their family … the car park talk [talking to whānau in the car park when dropping off or picking up their children from school] … [where] the parents are comfortable … You've got to open those relationships, I think [relationships] are really important. Not only for the child but for the whole family to be involved."*

> *"And even the little successes, just that little acknowledgement of their strengths; 'Oh, my teacher thinks I'm good at this. I'm proud'.*

The management team agreed that it was important not only for the students to believe in their abilities but also for the staff to believe in their students:

> *"The staff believe in their students and I think it is so important."*

Students believing in their potential is important, but teachers' believing in their students is arguably more important, because they are so influential.

Identifying opportunity

The Ministry of Education (2013a) recognises the importance of identifying opportunities for Māori students and advocate developing and supporting clear pathways that lead to excellent education and Māori language outcomes. The management team felt that there was an emphasis on student agency and student voice in the classrooms, and students' had a clear understanding of where they were in their learning journey. They knew what they were doing and what they need to do next. This information was shared with their whānau at student-led conferences. At this school, all classes worked with their students and parents to co-construct goals for their students. This was another example of whānau involvement. Two teachers spoke of the importance for students to see a clear pathway to achieve:

> *"They have their goals, they have where they should be at the end of the year … so they know what's expected."*

> *"… and they've got to know the pathway to get there. I think that is all around the clarity of the learning. It's got to be clear to them, so they know what it looks like."*

The intention of Ka Hikitia is to encourage strong educational pathways that span a student's journey from early learning, primary and secondary, through to tertiary education. For Māori students to achieve their aspirations and those of their whānau, hapū and iwi, they must be supported to create and implement their educational pathway plan. Identifying opportunities and putting them into action is crucial for Māori students to realise their potential. Data collected throughout their schooling can help identify opportunities for improved performance (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016a, p. 29). Although the management team and teachers at this school worked very hard to provide strong education opportunities in many curriculum areas, it was yet to provide access to a high-quality Māori language programme.

Investing in people and local solutions

It was evident that this school regularly engaged with whānau regarding cultural activities and events. This school had not yet built a relationship with local iwi or hapū, although the management team were in the early stages of building a relationship with a marae of a neighbouring school. Building a relationship had been difficult, as there was no marae close to the school, and most of the parents in the whānau group were from iwi outside the area.

The MoE state that "children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things" (2017b, p. 21). Cummins (2001) maintains that the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school, are the interactions between educators and students. In line with this, several teachers felt very strongly about the importance of knowing their students and building a relationship and a connection with them, demonstrating the concept of whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga includes actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2011b):

> *"It's getting to know who they are, not just what they can do, or can't do."*
>
> *"That young fella I was talking about … his thing was KFC. He loved KFC. So we constantly joked about him and KFC, and he joked with me about doughnuts. You know, the two of us, our thing was food, so we build our relationship around that … It seems a stupid thing to build a relationship on, but it worked … Again, it comes back to relationships. He had someone [who] believed that the colour of his skin, wasn't what made him worthwhile. It was what was inside that made him worthwhile. …"*
>
> *"It's having those connections, and making those connections and working with those connections."*

However, not all teachers recognised that there was a need to do anything different for Māori students. They felt that students should be treated equally and taught on a needs basis:

"I don't think there is any difference. Everybody is the same. I don't know why they are pulling them [Māori] out, because some of them are bloody clever, so it feels like they …[are] singling them out, when there is no need."

"I don't feel like you should single them (Maori students) out and go like this next level over the top sort of thing, just for them, when actually everybody needs it."

These two teachers appeared unaware of the Māori potential approach and unaware of the Ka Hititia strategy to reduce the disparity between Māori students and their peers. One teacher spoke of his/her experience:

"Being new in my journey of teaching … I suppose what others expectation of Māori is … often very different ... even though it [the expectation] is often lower than other cultures, [by] what we are told, [by] the Ministry and everything else … so, I suppose, I have maybe lowered my expectations."

This pathologizing ideology as Bishop (2005) explains is problematic, as Māori come to believe that they cannot achieve as well as others. It is heartening to see other teachers have different views:

"I don't actually understand why some people have a low expectation of Māori students. Because I don't see any reason why … the Māori students' I've taught have been very capable."

If all stakeholders with a role to play in Māori education success share the growing knowledge and evidence of what works, excellent education and Māori language outcomes will result. It is through the collaboration of stakeholders, that local solutions can be sought.

Collaborating and co-constructing

A goal of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), is for all stakeholders with a role to play in Māori education success, to collaborate to achieve excellent education and Māori language outcomes. The contributions of these stakeholders including whānau, hāpu and iwi, are key to engaging students in education (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Collaborating and co-constructing happened regularly and in a variety of ways in this school, both in the classroom and at the school level. As well as the collaboration between the school and whānau, as mentioned in the section above, collaboration and co-construction happened between teachers and students, and between students, during the normal course of a day. One teacher spoke of co-constructing goals with his/her students:

> *"Setting the goals is number one, we [teacher and students] have got to know what we're expected to achieve and how we're going to get there… where possible we try to co-construct [the goals]."*

Several teachers spoke of encouraging students to collaborate and support each other to do their best:

> "*I encourage them [students] to sit together and work together."*
>
> *"[In] maths … children are in groups and they all have a role and … no one is allowed to move on until everyone understands and can articulate the thinking."*
>
> *"When we are writing, they have to do the 'see three before me'. So they have to go and get some feedback [from other students]."*

Two years prior to this study, this school began the PB4L (Positive Behaviour For Learning) programme. This is an initiative led by the Ministry of Education in response to student behaviour in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 2015). The next step for this school is to collaborate and co-construct the programme with whānau and the local community to have an even a greater impact:

> *"We have started PB4L for behaviour … and now our job is to take it out to families and make sure they are on board with us."*

The management team place value on their community input.

Tailoring education to the student

A goal of Ka Hikitia for primary and secondary education is that "all Māori students are engaged in quality teaching and learning experiences" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 42). A critical factor of Ka Hititia to accelerate success for Māori students, is quality

leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance. This has a direct influence on student engagement and achievement. It is no surprise that Ka Hikitia considers high-quality teaching, to make the biggest difference to student outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Professional development learning is highly valued at this school. Each year a different curriculum area was targeted by management, to raise the teaching skills and in turn, the students learning. Teachers were well supported by management and outside professionals with skills in the targeted area. Sharing of teaching ideas and skills was also encouraged and promoted, with time regularly set aside at meetings for this to occur.

When tailoring education to Māori students, it is also important that teachers choose suitable resources. Several teachers spoke of choosing relevant literacy material:

> *"With literacy in particular, picking texts and activities that are going to capture Māori students … [and] what they would connect to."*
>
> *"It's really important to have readers that they understand, readers that are associated with their culture… Not just picking anything. Making sure that it will make sense."*

Teachers felt that it was essential to meet student's individual needs within a balanced programme.

The school planning documentation included high expectations as one of the guiding principles. It also included creating effective learning programmes, inclusiveness, and working with the community. These are all in line with the Māori potential approach.

Ako

Effective teaching and learning is dependent on the teacher's ability to motivate and engage students, and their relationship. Ako is a dynamic form of learning, describing a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship, where the teacher is also learning from the student (Ministry of Education, 2013a). The value of the pair and group learning approaches are affirmed by the principle of ako, in which students interact with their peers, teacher, tasks and resources. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

Ako was regularly demonstrated at this school. During weekly kapa haka sessions that were taught by a specialist teacher, teachers were learning alongside their students, more able students leading from the front. One teacher commented on the enjoyment he/she got from learning kapa haka with the students:

> *"And when the kids [go to] kapa haka, I'm there loving it and they can see it and [I] model the respect to Whaea as well."*

Whole school celebrations are other times when ako was demonstrated. During cultural days and events, the management team and teachers were receptive learners, with whānau members providing the teaching of Māori tikanga such as; when the Whānau group with the support of staff members, organised a school hāngi, and when the school visited a marae. One Matariki celebration several whānau members spoke to the whole school, including the staff, to share their knowledge and stories of Matariki. One parent taught staff and students flax weaving, then the more able students taught the less able in a tuakana-teina relationship (an older or more expert [tuakana] helps and guides a younger or less expert [teina]). Staff members demonstrated enthusiasm and a willingness to learn Māori tikanga and protocols.

A buddy system operated in this school. This is where a tuakana-teina relationship was established between a senior and a junior student. During this time, the role of teaching and learning could be reversed at any time. This allowed all senior students' a leadership opportunity to contribute to a junior child's learning and well being, as well as an opportunity to learn from the younger student:

> *"The big kids work with the little kids, with the teacher guiding as well, a whole family feeling."*

This tuakana-teina programme had been a feature at the school for many years and one fondly remembered by returning students. The principal spoke of activities that happened in the classrooms, such as teachers' noticing students' skills and knowledge, then providing leadership opportunities for them to share this knowledge. Ako was demonstrated in curriculum areas, such as mathematics:

> *"Maths … where [teachers] are doing a lot of group/pair talking and sharing about their learning. [Teachers] mix groups, so they are drawing on everybody's*

different strengths and everybody is expected to play a role and talk about their thinking."

The principal also acknowledged that there were activities that could be built upon, to encourage ako:

"In the talent show, they [students] showcased these wonderful things … that next step on from that, [is] how can we utilize or share their knowledge with others?"

Genuine acknowledgement of their student's personal experiences and allowing students to share their expertise with others, was one way of demonstrating ako. Some classes demonstrated ako through incorporating reciprocal reading as part of their programme and some used the Developing Mathematical Inquiry Communities (DMIC) mathematics programme, incorporating a collaborative and culturally responsive pedagogy (Centre for Research in Mathematics Education, n.d.). Others spoke of encouraging discussion, working together and feedback and feedforward from peers:

"We have a lot of discussion no matter what the curriculum area is, and there's a lot of talking … From that, we learn different aspects of information and knowledge [from each other]."

"There is the culture in the classroom [when there is] anybody new, all of them know that they need to look out for that new person, play with them, help them, guide them. Help transition new children into school with classroom buddies."

"In our writing I have introduced a culture of a three before me, checking on their own, checking with a buddy. When they are checking with a buddy, they do two stars and a wish, and then they come and see the teacher." [The buddy suggests two things that have been done well, and one thing they wish was in the piece of writing. The student is expected to consider this feedback to improve their work, before seeing the teacher.]

"Big buddies and parent helpers coming in … and teaching."

At times, whānau have been invited into classrooms as the experts, to share their knowledge and skills with a class, demonstrating ako, reciprocal teaching and learning.

In the school planning documentation, ako is included as one of the cultural dimensions. Tuakana-tēina relationships in learning and teaching are recognised as a valuable process in the school charter.

Identity, Language and Culture Count

A strong link has been identified between well-being and achievement, with the students' well-being strongly influenced by a clear sense of identity, as well as access and exposure to their language and culture (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Māori language is considered the foundation of Māori culture and identity, and it is through language and the connection with their Māori identity, Māori students can participate in te ao Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Therefore, it was important to find out how this school integrated identity, language and culture into this school.

There were a number of cultural activities in the school, which may encourage Māori student identity. Over recent years, the management team regularly incorporated Māori cultural events and activities into the school programme to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate Māori identity, language and culture. Kapa haka, as well as annually celebrating Matariki, are now very much a part of the school programme.

Kapa Haka had been taught in the school for four years and had become embedded into the school culture, with the whole school and the Performance Group performing at school events. The Performance Group also participated in interschool kapa haka festivals. At times, the Performance Group consisted of over fifty students, involving almost one-quarter of the students at this school. The most important components of kapa haka are intrinsically linked to Māori culture and identity, as well as the essential element of whanaungatanga (Pihama et al., 2014). This has been evident during school performances, with students showing a sense of pride in their school, culture, identity and language. Students enjoyed the leadership roles and the responsibility that came with it, as demonstrated in the willingness of students to take on kaea (leader) roles. Kapa haka was seen as an opportunity for both teachers and students to learn tikanga and te reo from the specialist teacher.

It was acknowledged that Māori language progression throughout the school was still being developed, and the management team recognised that more work was needed,

to build upon what was already happening in the school and to meet the te reo Māori progressions set out by the Ministry of Education:

> *"It's a work in progress. We just keep building and building and building."*
>
> *"In terms of meeting the te reo progressions, we actually do need to put some effort in, to get people off level one."*

When asked what management could do to help staff get to the next level, it was suggested that learning together and following a specific programme would be helpful. To improve both the teaching and learning of te reo Māori, one of the management team suggested employing a specialist teacher, to teach both the students and teachers. This was under consideration, but not yet actioned at the time of writing.

When appointing new staff members, depth of understanding and knowledge in te reo Māori, culture and tikanga was something management looked for. Although the knowledge and confidence with teaching te reo Māori varied between staff, the management team believed that all staff members acknowledged and valued Māori language. Together the management team and teaching staff looked closely at and discussed the teacher standards, so all teachers knew what was expected of them. These standards include; demonstrating commitment to tangata whenuatanga (awareness and knowledge of the whenua or land we come from) and the Treaty partnership (acknowledging histories, heritages, languages and cultures; and practising and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori) (Teaching Council, 2017).

Ākonga Māori (Māori students) do best when they can see themselves and their identity, language and culture in the daily practices of our education system (Ministry of Education, 2019d). At this school, when teachers are planning units of work for their students, they are required by management to consider culturally responsive practices and Māori models of learning, and include these in their planning.

The ways students identity, language and culture was integrated into classrooms varied, but the commonalities were compassion and the importance of all students feeling affirmed, accepted and valued for who they are. When speaking of the curriculum, one teacher said:

"*There is a choice about what you study and what you do in a classroom."*

Suggesting that it was up to teachers not only management, to include Māori culture, history and language into a class programme. Some Māori signage was seen in the school. The management team were considering adding to this in the future. Displaying Māori signage is important to show students that Māori language is important, but to value the language, it must be used.

Two teachers of senior students saw studying New Zealand history as an important part of acknowledging Māori identity and culture. Along with studying the Treaty, these senior classes looked in-depth at New Zealand history, to give the students' background to the Treaty to ensure a better understanding.

One class opened its doors to whānau to come in and teach about the Treaty. This was considered so successful, that other families also chose to come in to teach aspects of their culture:

> *"Their culture was valued because their family was coming in with them and exposing the whole class to it… we had two or three families come in and not just the Māori children's families. There was Dutch, English, they all came in a shared a little bit of their culture."*

One teacher spoke of the importance of identifying all students' ancestry and acknowledging these with flags as a way of recognising diversity in the class. Throughout the year, the class looked at individual flags and the cultural group and practices that it represents. Integrating different languages, in morning greetings, was another way several teachers valued students' culture.

The Ministry of Education considers "Māori language in education [to be] critical for the Crown to meet its Treaty obligations, to strengthen and protect the Māori language" (2013a, p. 28). When asked how they support Māori language in their classes, teachers' responses varied greatly; ranging from very little and apprehensive, to teachers who were genuinely trying to integrate Māori language throughout their programme. Most teachers tried to use te reo Māori during their day in some form. The most common forms of te reo Māori used were greetings, simple commands, waiata, colours and daily calendar activities. Two teachers used karakia and whakatauki (Māori proverbs) in their

classes daily. The school House groups in this school were colours and always referred to by their Māori names. During kapa haka, students and teachers were exposed to karakia, hīmene (hymns), waiata and simple commands.

Most teachers' were keen to improve their te reo Māori, although spoke of their difficulties and lack of confidence teaching it. It was suggested by several teachers, that professional development and support to teach te reo Māori would be beneficial to both the students and the teachers:

> *"I just think it's really important … for myself as well, I want to keep on learning. I … want to increase my knowledge and become fluent … I just feel like we are from New Zealand … [and] Māori culture is part of us*."
>
> *"I'm not fluent enough in te reo language. So I think that it would be really good if we could get consistent professional development around te reo*."
>
> *"I don't feel confident myself… to be able to effectively do it."*
>
> *"If you're not fluent in Māori, you are doing more dis-service trying ... I think it needs to have a fluent Māori speaker in some sort of audiovisual sort of thing. Like language kits that they do for Spanish and French."*

Generally, the teachers felt that the students responded positively to learning te reo Māori across the school, one teacher suggested that it was "always fun". Most teachers considered it important to teach te reo and Māori culture in schools:

> "*I think there is an acceptance, that it's part of who we are. In my class, I don't see any negativity, about anything to do with the language or the culture of Māori. ... It's part of New Zealander's lives."*

It would appear that some professional development in teaching Māori language would be well received and valuable to the teaching staff.

In recognising indigeneity and distinctiveness, teachers need to have a sensitivity to the cultural background of Māori students because teacher's who are culturally sensitive will be more able to understand and respond to the diverse learning in classrooms today (Macfarlane, 2004). Cultural sensitivity was demonstrated by some teachers:

"It's all about [Māori students] being proud of who they are, what they are and having mana, is number one. So, if they are feeling proud of themselves, they are ready to achieve. … It's all about giving them that awhi (embrace) if you will, to want to learn, and to be proud to learn... it's understanding their backgrounds … knowing the learners"

"I think it is important to identify where we have come from. I don't just mean ourselves personally, but our ancestry, so it's one of the first things that I do a classroom. We talk about where we are from, our path."

"One of my kid's speeches is about Kapa Haka … That was acknowledged and celebrated and yes it's part of you … and I'm going to help you do a really good job of that."

This is an example of a teacher recognising and celebrating his/her student's indigeneity during speech writing, and believing in the student's ability to complete the task well. Recognising indigeneity and distinctiveness is about being culturally responsive to students. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106).

Identity, language and culture are incorporated into this school's planning documentation. One of the school's guiding principles is cultural diversity. This includes two sections. The first was 'cultural perspectives' and the second was 'tikanga Māori and te reo Māori'. The school recognised that it's curriculum needed reviewing to include recognition of the unique position of Māori within New Zealand society. It also recognised the value in tikanga and te reo Māori to enhance culture and knowledge, and valued the wisdom and guidance of whānau and was keen to foster a positive, reciprocal relationship of sharing cultural knowledge. Culture was a strategic goal, that included developing an inclusive school culture where whānau and community are nurtured and strengthened. It recognised that culturally responsiveness will strengthen the school's inclusive culture that celebrates diversity.

Productive Partnerships

The MoE (2013a) explains a productive partnership as "a two-way relationship, leading to and generating shared action, outcomes and solutions" (p. 18), clearly stating that to be successful, all stakeholders must form productive partnerships, where knowledge and information are exchanged, with all parties contributing to achieving the goals. Furthermore, it acknowledges the understanding that Māori students are connected to whānau and should be viewed as connected; with these partnerships requiring an understanding and acknowledgement of the value of Māori identity, language and culture (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

The management team spoke of whānau and extended whānau regularly being involved in class and school-wide events. They were considered valuable members of the school community, and always consulted with, before and during the organisation of cultural events:

> *"[Whānau] involvement in class and school-wide events … I think that's really important. We still try to carry on with the Hui [Whānau group meeting] … And I think those are ways that we encourage [Māori families] to be part of [our school]. The expectation is that all families will come to interviews [including student-led conferences]. We do want them involved."*

The principal felt that when the Whānau group was valued and operating away from school expectations, more positive and genuine feedback was received:

> *"The Whānau group has developed out of school and is a really strong group and … open communication between us and them [Whānau group] and not putting our expectations and values to have formal meetings [has worked well]."*

At the time of writing, the school was beginning the process of designing a local curriculum. Consultation was expected to take place with all members of the school community as part of this process.

It was acknowledged that the recent stepping down of the only Māori member of the Board of Trustees (BOT), due to work commitments, was a great loss. This member was an asset to the BOT. His expertise regarding Māori protocols, tikanga and te reo was

regularly shared. The school whānau group had been approached and were actively looking for someone to represent Māori whānau during this study:

> *"It's been hard, because we have lost a [Māori] board member, but I know the Whānau group are working really hard to try to be represented on our board."*

Although the school has a good relationship with the school whānau, the management team acknowledged that connections with local iwi and hapū were still to be made and required, to enhance Māori identity, language and culture in the school. The MoE (2013a) advocates, "Educational professionals must recognise and value the contribution of whānau, hapū, and iwi, and build connections with them both inside and outside of school" (p. 41). This strategy recognises that the contribution of whānau, hapū, and iwi are key to engaging students in education.

All teachers voiced their enthusiasm to involve whānau as much as possible; and actively encouraged whānau to come into class to support specific activities such as sports events, trips, arts and crafts. Several teachers spoke of having an 'open door' policy, where whānau were welcome to come in at any time, ensuring an open relationship between the teacher and parents. After consultation with the Whānau group, the school had worked together to provide Māori cultural activities for the students. Whānau shared their knowledge on topics such as Matariki and flax weaving, as well as hāngi and kapa haka preparations.

Whānau were encouraged to contribute to their child's learning at home, by listening and interacting with their child while they read and/or completing homework. Information technology was widely used in all classes. The See-Saw app was utilised as a method of communication. In this programme, messages and photos are sent directly to parents' phones/tablets and can be immediately accessed. Parents can comment or send messages back to the teacher or child. Also, email and text messages were regularly used:

> *"See-Saw is one way [of communicating] if the whānau aren't comfortable coming into the classroom."*

> *"I would just private message and just say [your child] did great work today, have a look at this..."*

Several teachers spoke of regular parental involvement at the school. To build a relationship with parents, teachers need to be available and welcoming:

> *"I think it is also like letting them know that they can come and talk to you, [and] come into the class and see what you're doing ... I have parents come into my class all the time … I think it's building that relationship."*

One teacher spoke of ways to build a relationship with whānau who don't frequently come onto the school grounds:

> *"I've got a particular family that doesn't come into the school grounds very often, so I made a conscious effort to go out into the bus bay [car park area] and getting to know them a bit more at the start of the year."*

One teacher spoke about the importance of respect and understanding:

> *"I don't like to put families on the spot, life is complicated ... So any communication is done with a … space, to give people time to think about and consider, and it goes in the homework book."*

From what I have witnessed, parents and whānau members appear comfortable to interact with staff and management, and become involved in this school. The next step for this school is to include hapū and iwi as partners.

Productive partnerships are valued in this school and incorporated into the planning. Community engagement is a school guiding principle, and strengthening it, was one of the objectives. Communication and consultation also featured in the planning documentation, with a strategic goal of developing an inclusive school culture where whānau and community are nurtured and strengthened.

This School's Provision and Statements for the Engagement with Ka Hikitia

As seen throughout this chapter, this school had planning and documentation in place to successfully implement the Ka Hikitia strategy, with documentation incorporating the vision and guiding principles as set out in Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Attendance

Along with effective teaching, the Ministry of Education suggests that the greatest influence on student engagement and achievement is attendance and throughout New Zealand, Māori students are over-represented in the statistics of low attendance (Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2017a; 2019d).

The majority of students at this school had regular attendance of over ninety percent. It is important to remember this is a small sample, so one or two students can make a significant difference to statistics. However, students who identified as Māori had lower rates of attendance than New Zealand European students. About a third (33.4 percent) of Māori students had less than ninety percent attendance, compared to 21 percent of New Zealand European students. Of students who had moderate to chronic attendance of under eighty percent, 8.8 percent identified as Māori compared to 2.3 percent who identified as European. This suggests that Māori student attendance at this school followed the national trend of lower attendance compared to New Zealand European students. Although the numbers of Māori students with moderate and chronic absences was only five, this school was not complacent. They proactively worked with whānau to understand and minimise absenteeism, with strong relationships between whānau and school being key to improved attendance (Ministry of Education, 2011a). This was in line with Ka Hikitia.

Literacy and Numeracy Data

Māori student achievement, participation and engagement data held by the MoE is useful for stimulating discussion and raising questions about Māori student achievement (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016a). Therefore, disaggregation of student performance data is necessary to guide decisions on how best to support Māori students to achieve academically (Ministry of Education, 2013a). The MoE (2013a) found that Māori students in English medium schools were more likely to have lower levels in numeracy and literacy than non-Māori students, and the danger of not addressing this early is that students would be at risk of disengaging and falling behind in their education. A goal outlined in Ka Hikitia for Primary and Secondary education was “eighty-five percent of Māori students will be achieving at or above their appropriate National Standard in literacy and numeracy, by the end of 2017” (Ministry

of Education, 2013a, p. 58). Because National Standards officially ended in 2017, focus is now on progress and achievement of the New Zealand curriculum levels.

In 2019 the Education Review Office (ERO) reported the following findings for this school:

- Approximately half of all students are exceeding expected curriculum levels in reading and approximately a third in writing and mathematics.
- The overall reading achievement had improved from 2017 to 2018 for Māori students, and they were now working at comparable levels to their New Zealand European peers.
- Interim achievement data for 2019 showed significant improvement in writing achievement, especially for Māori students and boys, however, significant disparity remained for Māori students in reading and mathematics.
- ERO analysed data from the end of 2018 to the end of term three 2019. They noted accelerated learning for some Māori students. Accelerated progress was shown in approximately half of all Māori, to reach expected curriculum levels in writing and approximately one third in reading and mathematics. (Due to ethical reasons this school's name cannot be identified, therefore, this school report cannot be referenced.)

These results demonstrated that this school has made significant progress since the 2017 ERO report, however further improvements were still required for Māori students to reach parity with their peers.

Summary

This chapter presented the research findings of the management team and teaching staff, as they discussed their understanding and implementation of the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Views and teaching practice commonalities and differences were identified. The findings emphasised the variance of knowledge and understanding by the staff members.

It was evident that the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a) were supported through the school documentation. The Māori student attendance data suggested that this school followed the national trend of lower attendance compared to New Zealand European students. The literacy and numeracy data obtained from the school principal, school charter and 2019 ERO report, suggested that further improvements were required for Māori students to reach parity with their peers.

The MoE plans to relaunch a further iteration of Ka Hikitia this year, supported by another initiative, Te Hurihanganui. It will build on from what has been learned from Ka Hikitia and provides hope for the future, for improved educational outcomes and elimination of disparity for our Māori students. This school was willing to engage with Ka Hikitia, therefore, there is a likelihood that they will also engage with Te Hurihanganui.

The following chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research questions and discuss the overall implications.

Chapter Five – Discussion

He waka eke noa

A canoe that we are all in with no exception.

(Ministry of Education, 2013b)

This whakatauki relates to the importance of all partners contributing to strengthening Māori identity, language and culture in education.

Introduction

This chapter begins by exploring the Ka Hikitia strategy, before discussing the findings in relation to the research questions. The overall implications will then be considered. The chapter concludes with this school's progress towards achieving the vision of Ka Hikitia. Similarities and differences between ideas and practices will be highlighted, as I explore how management and teachers support Māori students to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

The Ka Hikitia Strategy

In exploring the implementation of Ka Hikitia, I examined teacher practice in-depth, looking beyond teacher practice to examine notions of critical consciousness and teacher engagement in conscientisation. This is necessary to create transformative praxis, where theory-based practices can transform the status quo, resulting in more equitable outcomes for Māori students (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.-b). Kia Eke Panuku (n.d.-b) suggests a 'critical cycle' of inquiry, consisting of reflecting – reviewing – acting (repeat). This 'critical cycle' requires conscientisation by understanding current practice implications, resistance by deciding what needs to change, and transformative praxis by implementing theory-based practices, that lead to accelerated practices for Māori students.

Research tells us, that leadership plays a vital role in changing and disrupting the status quo, and for Māori underachievement to change in our schools (Berryman et al., 2016a). To achieve this, leaders need to understand that traditionally, schools have had a role in reproducing the fabric of society, making schools' a good place to start to make changes.

Leaders have a critical role in making this happen. Under the Treaty of Waitangi (Treaty) and within their own schools', leaders have the influence, power and the mandate through Ka Hikitia to make more of a difference for marginalised students, especially Māori students. School leaders have the power to hinder or accelerate the social change required to address disparities. Individual teachers can do what they can in their classrooms, but without the support of school management and leaders, transformative change throughout the school is unlikely.

How effectively do the management and staff understand the vision statement?

The vision of Ka Hikitia phase one and two was to step up the performance of the education system, to ensure Māori were able to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a). A strategic goal outlined in this school's Charter was; 'Māori students are engaged in their learning and are achieving educational success with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori'(due to ethical reasons this school's name cannot be identified, therefore, this school's Charter cannot be referenced). This is a very well-intentioned goal and in line with the Ka Hikitia vision, however, as my findings show, many staff members admitted to not understanding the term 'as Māori'. M. Durie's definition of being able to live 'as Māori' is:

> To have access to te ao Māori, the Māori world view [with] access to language, culture, marae (tribal or community cultural centres), tikanga (customs), and resources such as land, whānau, and Kaimoana (seafood) (2003, p. 185).

To achieve Māori students engaging and achieving success 'as Māori', educators must not only value Māori students' identity, language and culture but also provide access to te ao Māori through teaching and learning opportunities. The school in this research ran a kapa haka programme for the whole school and an optional performance group. This is one means that Māori students saw their culture and language being valued. Pihama et al. (2014) advocate that intrinsic links to Māori culture and identity are important components of kapa haka, as well as the importance of people and connectedness, such as the element of whanaungatanga between the school, Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, iwi and the Māori community. In this school, relationships were enhanced through kapa haka. Whānau members

contributed to finding a Kapa haka leader and supported the group during performance times. It provided opportunities for whānau to use their skills and knowledge in an environment where they felt comfortable and familiar. Kapa haka also provided opportunities for student leadership, fostering students' mana, and respect for Māori culture, language and tikanga.

To ascertain if students were 'enjoying and achieving success as Māori', the management team felt that teachers' listened to 'student voice', not only about their academic work, but also about how they were feeling, and used this as an indicator. Although student voice can be a valuable source of information, it can also be a weapon as much as a tool (O'Neil, 2014). Teachers need to be aware that discourses of students are often different from the discourses of teachers, therefore, adults asking children what they think without exploring the discourses can be problematic. I have heard students tell teachers what they want to hear and not necessarily, how they actually feel; furthermore, small children often have difficulty articulating their thoughts and feelings.

Looking critically at the experiences of Māori students' education, Bishop and Berryman (2006) identified three discourses as influencing the child's academic achievement, both positively and negatively. The first discourse focused on the child's home life as being the source of major influence, lying outside the school and classroom. The second focused on the structure and systems, including influences associated with the education and school system, again lying outside the classroom. The third focused on relationships and interactions, including those between teachers and students; students and students; teachers, students and whānau; whānau, students, schools and communities and so on. Only this third discourse focused on influences coming from within the classroom. Educators can only change what happens in the classroom; however, their influence may have far-reaching effects, either positively or negatively.

The term 'as Māori' is at the heart of Ka Hikitia and it cannot be consciously embedded into the school programme if it is not understood. The confusion around the term 'as Māori' in the vision statement, was prevalent in the staff of the school in this research with comments such as; "I have problems identifying Māori in that type of sentence, as Māori"; and "I still don't quite understand (the vision statement) … everybody should be

able to achieve success, irrespective of their ethnic background". Not only understanding what 'as Māori' means, but also why it was necessary. However, the Auditor-General's (Provost, 2016, p. 6) view is, "the absence of a clear definition is not a barrier to getting on with it," suggesting many schools are applying the intent of the strategy. Racism is inherent in statements such as, "Māori need to have a bit more drive … I deeply resent, that if there's a problem, it's a result of colonisation." This highlights two issues, racism and assimilation. The effects of Māori assimilation are not understood by all. This follows the discourse within which R. Bishop (2005) found most teachers positioned themselves, where the major influence on Māori students' educational achievement emerged from outside the classroom, schooling and formal educational settings; and theorized that the students themselves and their homes were to blame for the problems they were having with education. The denial of the effect of race is defined by MacDonald and Reynolds (2017) as racial silencing. This way of thinking was not prevalent throughout the interviews but was something that needed to be addressed. It is likely that if a staff member at this school felt that way, then other educators may too.

One educator suggested; "We need to recognise the whole child, rather than just reading, writing and maths as a success". Although the intent was for students to have their needs met academically and holistically; the majority of staff did not understand 'as Māori' or recognise the importance of te ao Māori. As M. Durie's (2003) definition advised, to live 'as Māori', is to have access to te ao Māori. Under the Treaty, rich and legitimate knowledge located within te ao Māori must be held safely in the education system to support Māori to live and succeed as Māori (Te Hurihanganui Mātanga, 2019). The three teachers who felt they understood 'as Māori', suggested things such a, "bringing in the meaning of Māori into learning. Making it more purposeful … what they hear, what they see, their cultural beliefs" and "knowing who they are, knowing their heritage, knowing their culture, being proud of that … The school having that connection with the community and vice-versa." Some excellent opportunities to experience te ao Māori were happening in these classrooms. Allowing these staff members to share their thoughts and ideas with other staff members, could create some interesting discussions and some shared understandings. Professional development in this area was needed so

that all educators in this school were confident and inspired to incorporate te ao Māori into school life.

The MoE Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) (Alton-Lee, 2003) analysis, indicated that the education system performance had persistently been inequitable for Māori learners (Berryman & Eley, 2017a). Berryman and Eley (2017a) cited the following contributing factors:

- Low inclusion of Māori themes and topics in English-medium education
- Fewer teacher-student interactions.
- Less positive feedback.
- More negative comments targeted at Māori learners.
- Under-assessment of capability.
- Widespread targeting of Māori learners with ineffective or even counterproductive teaching strategies.
- Failure to uphold mana Māori in education.
- Inadvertent teacher racism.
- Peer racism.
- Mispronounced names and so on.

  (p. 3)

This is significant because we know through past research when education reflects and values identity, language and culture, Māori students do much better (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2013a). Polarised communication can occur when people look out for their interests and have little concern for others. Macfarlane (2004) contends that through conversations with colleagues and students, many teachers unconsciously convey small intolerances and this lack of interest in the backgrounds of others impedes communication and harms the whanaungatanga process. If we believe other people have deficiencies, then our interactions will tend to follow this thinking and be negative and unproductive (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 267). Alton-Lee (2003) found that teacher expectation varied according to a student's ethnicity, gender, dis/ability as well as other characteristics unrelated to their actual capability. This is not necessarily a conscious prejudice, but instead, "part of a pattern

of well-intended but disadvantageous treatment" (Berryman & Eley, 2017a, p. 3). M. Durie (2003) advises that the goal of Māori to live 'as Māori' should be consistent in education, as the purpose of education is to prepare people to live in society, and preparation to live in Māori society is also necessary. Ka Hikitia is the imperative and until we live it, nothing will change.

How effectively do the management and staff understand the guiding principles and critical factors?

As discussed earlier, Ka Hikitia is underpinned by the intent of the Treaty, addressing educators' obligations and responsibilities to ensure Māori students achieve success as Māori (Anderson, 2018). At the time of signing, the original intent of the Treaty was understood by Māori within the concept of mana ōrite (equality), with the responsibility of both groups to maintain the mana of the other (Berryman et al., 2018). In English it was translated as a partnership, however, this partnership has been far from equal, with the more dominant partner defining the parameters (Berryman et al., 2018). Ka Hikitia is a mandated government strategy to step up how the education system performs to ensure Māori students achieve success as Maori. In this section, I will address each Ka Hikitia guiding principle and discuss how this school worked to deliver these.

Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty is central to our national heritage, identity and future. It is acknowledged by Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a) as a document that protects Māori learners' rights to achieve true citizenship and knowledge, as well as protecting te reo Māori as taonga. The Treaty promised partnership, protection and full participation in the benefits the Crown had to offer (Berryman, 2018). It underpins Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a) strategies and provides a context for the relationships between the Crown, iwi and Māori to address educators' responsibilities and obligations, to ensure Māori students achieve success as Māori. This responsibility is shared between the Crown (represented by MoE and other education agencies), and iwi, hapū and whānau (Ministry of Education, 2013a) and is critical for a transformative education (Te Hurihanganui Mātanga, 2019). To lift the performance of the education system, collaboration with iwi and Māori organisations is essential. This school had worked hard to build a good relationship with their school Māori whānau. However,

they were yet to develop a reciprocal or whanaungatanga relationship with local hapū and iwi. Finding a connection to local iwi had proved difficult because many school whānau came from outside the region. This will likely change as new whānau join the school. However, connections had been made with hapū from a neighbouring marae, and a relationship was in its early stages at the time of writing, with organisation underway for the school to visit the marae, as well as hold the local interschool kapa haka festival, later in the year. The management team admitted that they still had work to do in this area, and discussions within the school, were underway of what this school could bring to the relationship, such as invitations to school events and kapa haka performances. The school discussed the importance and relevance of building a reciprocal relationship, rather than just one of convenience. Building a reciprocal relationship is essential to fulfil the productive partnerships principle. Having this legitimated by the other group is the most respectful way to do this. However, at the time of writing, this was still an intention and was yet to happen.

MoE (2013a) states that the Treaty principle is important so that "the position of Māori is considered fairly when developing policies and funding" (p. 14). The Ka Hikitia principles and critical factors were evident in this school's 'Standards for the Teaching Profession' and the 'Improvement Plan for Māori Students', which had the strategic goal; 'Māori students are engaged in their learning and are achieving educational success with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori'. The annual goal at the time of writing was 'to increase the number of Māori students at or above their curriculum level in reading, writing and mathematics'. This school allocated funding for Māori priority learners, employed teacher aides for additional support and funded additional resources, however, this did not address the strategic goal of achieving 'with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori'. It is less likely to be achieved if the meaning of 'as Māori' is not understood. Students' academic progress was tracked, and assistance was given to those who required it, in turn, providing the best possible academic outcomes for Māori students.

"The Treaty provides a context for the relationship between the Crown, iwi and Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 14), therefore to embed the Treaty principle, culturally responsive pedagogy of relations is required. Such a pedagogy requires contexts for

learning where: culture counts, power is shared, connectedness occurs, interactive and dialogic learning takes place, and a common vision of excellence for Māori students is held (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Some teachers entered into culturally responsive pedagogy of relations with their students however, others were yet to understand the value in this type of relationship. Berryman et al. (2018) advise that applying a power-sharing framework is challenging, and changing the traditional top-down teaching method was not easy. To implement this pedagogical shift, will require credence and commitment from both management and teaching staff.

To implement the Treaty principle, educators must engage in critical consciousness. Critical consciousness can be defined as the ability to recognise and analyse systems of inequality and taking action against them (El-Amin, et al., 2017). Māori learners have been underserved by the education system for many years, with various factors contributing to this, many of them stemmed from racism and bias inherent in our system (Ministry of Education, 2019b). The MoE (2019b) received consistent feedback and examples from Māori students and their whānau, of racism and bias, received in New Zealand schools, and the negative impact it had on their ability to achieve. Racism must be addressed to improve education outcomes for all learners.

Research has suggested that critical consciousness may be the way to academic achievement for marginalised students (El-Amin, et al., 2017). Ka Hikitia is to be relaunched, supported by another initiative, Te Hurihanganui, designed to address disparity and critical consciousness. Te Hurihanganui has been co-designed to improve equity and to address racism in the education system while supporting Māori to succeed as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2019a). Mana ōrite is one of the design principles which states the Treaty "is the foundation for equal, reciprocal, respectful and interdependent relationships between Māori and non-Māori" (Te Hurihanganui Mātanga, 2019, para. 16). To achieve mana ōrite we must treat each other how we would like to be treated (Berryman et al., 2018).

The education system is part of the fabric of our society, with deeply embedded systems and processes that perpetuate the inequalities and disparities that emerge from our history. Ka Hikitia serves to disrupt this. As part of the Treaty principle, educators have a responsibility to contribute to accelerating the success of Māori students.

Although the provision for upholding the Treaty principle was included in the school documentation, and to a degree, many aspect were being understood and actioned in the school by some staff members; it was evident not all staff understood their obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi. The foundation of Māori culture and identity is language (Ministry of Education, 2013a), however, the opportunity to learn te reo Māori was lacking in some classes.

Māori Potential Approach

The Māori potential approach was designed to concentrate on what will achieve transformational shifts in performance for Māori students in the education system (Ministry of Education, 2009a). The core principle of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 is, "All Māori students have the potential to excel and be successful" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 15). This approach acknowledges that all Māori learners have unlimited potential, and seeks to shift the focus to expanding on successes, with less focus on addressing problems and disparities (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Aspects of this school's planning documentation supported the Māori potential approach principle. The Charter specified holding high expectations for all students. The strategic plan outlined working towards equitable and excellent outcomes for all students. Cultural inclusiveness outlined in the Charter was also in line with the Māori Potential Approach principle.

Several teachers recognised the value in the Māori potential approach. One teacher stated he/she believed that teachers must have high expectations, for students' to achieve their potential. Another achieved great success with Māori students because he/she expected that they could, would and should succeed. Other teachers' spoke of the importance of acknowledging all students' strengths and successes, to build confidence and self-esteem, and encouraged students to feel 'proud'. The management team were confident that staff believed in their students and valued this. The importance of Māori students believing in their potential is undeniable, however, it is arguably more important that teachers believe in their potential, because of their influence.

The Māori potential approach places more focus on positive aspects such as; realising potential, identifying opportunities, investing in people and local solutions, tailoring

education to the learner, celebrating indigeneity and distinctiveness, and collaborating and co-constructing; with less focus placed on problems, deficits, and interventions (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a). The Ka Hikitia intention is to encourage strong educational pathways. Educators must identify and embrace opportunities to enhance Māori students in education, not just academically, but culturally, emotionally and socially. For Māori students to realise their potential, and to achieve their aspirations and those of their whānau, hapū and iwi, educators support is crucial to identify opportunities, as well as to create and implement a pathway plan.

The Māori potential approach acknowledges the importance of many parties in Māori education, including learners, parents, whānau, iwi, educators, Māori communities and government (Ministry of Education, 2009a). There was evidence of engagement with parents and whānau regarding cultural activities and events, as well as through daily school activities. The school regularly asked for parental input through newsletters, emails and online platforms, however engaging Māori whānau is likely to be more effective when approached face to face or through the whānau group hui.

Cummins (2001) considers the most significant determinant of success or failure for a student are the interactions between the teacher and student. Through this research, educators were found to strongly value relationships with their students and to some degree, relationships with whānau. However, relationships with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, were not yet a priority; although were acknowledged as a requirement. Knowing their students and having respectful working relationships was important to these educators. However, two teachers did not recognise the need to do anything differently for Māori students; instead, they felt that all students should be treated equally. With comments such as: “I don’t think there is any difference. Everybody is the same.” And “I don’t feel like you should single them [Maori students] out”. We know from previous research, that when the focus is on all students, the disparity is continued (Berryman et al., 2014). The focus on all students is the assimilatory response for any students who are different. It is worth noting, that focussing on Māori learners potential is in contrast to the pervasive discourse in society, where those who traditionally hold the power and privilege, perpetuate disparities through their impositional stance and deficit paradigms (Anderson, 2018; Berryman, 2013b).

Two teachers' spoke of learning who their students were, including their whakapapa. In doing so, these teachers were acting culturally responsive. They recognised the indigeneity and distinctiveness of their students. Focusing positively on these aspects was an important step in supporting Māori students to realise their potential (Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2013a). These teachers acknowledged their students identity and actively utilised their experiences to enhance learning. Cultural aspects of their life were acknowledged, celebrated, and brought into their learning. These teachers also spoke of students having mana. Mana is a key concept within te ao Māori, that carries complex and nuanced meanings. For example, Hemara (2000) defines mana as "authority, control, influence, prestige, power, psychic force, effectual, binding, authoritative . . . and take effect", whilst Love (2004) defines mana more deeply as "spiritual power and authority" (cited in Rameka, 2015, p. 86). Mana is a vital aspect of Māori perceptions of one's self and the world, with most activities linked to preserving and improving mana (Rameka, 2015). Shirres (1997) considered the understandings of mana to be critical to understanding the Māori child and the Māori world, with all children "born with an increment of mana from their parents and ancestors" (cited in Rameka, 2015, p. 86). If mana is a source of strength, pride and identity, and allowed to walk-tall, it has a lasting influence; however, if mishandled, it can become the bearer of shame, ridicule and embarrassment. Teachers' have a responsibility to ensure they are helping to enhance student mana, as it can be fragile.

Power-sharing relationships are a way of enhancing Māori student potential, as the way a person feels has a huge impact on their performance. Fundamental to power-sharing relationships is, "challenging and changing the traditional top-down model of transmission teaching", to one where power is shared (Berryman et al., 2018, p. 5). Through conversations with teachers', it appeared that power-sharing occurred in some classes. To achieve success in implementing the Māori potential approach, culturally responsive classroom practices are essential; however, these practices were not shared by all teachers and exposed a gap that needed remedying. New Zealand's current policy framework fails to positively influence reforms for Māori students. Evidence clearly shows that the New Zealand education system is failing many Māori students, particularly Māori males (Berryman et al., 2016a; May et al., 2019; Sturrock, 2004;). If

Māori learners in English-medium classrooms are to realise their true potential, transformative educational reform is required.

Ako

The Māori concept of ako means to teach and to learn, in a two-way process. Reciprocity is emphasised, where the teacher is a partner in learning, rather than the fountain of all knowledge (Bishop, 2003). Ako was included in the school planning documentation, which stated that Tātaiako competencies (Ministry of Education, 2011b) be acknowledged in classroom practice, with ako being a competency. In this school, ako was regularly demonstrated, both in classrooms and in school-wide activities. Ako regularly occurred during Kapa haka sessions, where teachers' were learners alongside students, and taught by students. The Treaty is the foundation for ako relations between Māori and non-Māori (Te Hurihanganui Mātanga, 2019). This teaching and learning relationship promotes equality, reciprocity, respect and interdependence, where students and teachers can learn from and with each other (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.-a). Taking opportunities to learn from and take advice from whānau also demonstrates ako (Berryman et al., 2018). School cultural days and events were times where reciprocity transpired. Through my association with this school, I witnessed educators demonstrate enthusiasm and a willingness to learn about Māori history and te ao Māori, during such events. Whānau were invited to share their knowledge and expertise on topics such as Matariki, putting down a hāngi, and marae protocols and procedures. Staff reported their gratitude towards whānau and appeared to genuinely appreciate expanding their knowledge of te ao Māori. Whānau outwardly appeared to enjoy sharing their knowledge and skills, leading to positive reciprocal (whanaungatanga) relationships.

Curriculum areas such as mathematics, reading and writing, were areas where teachers reported ako occurred in their programme. In mathematics, students were encouraged to talk and share their learning. In some classes, groups were of mixed abilities, where different strengths were drawn upon. Ako was demonstrated through students teaching and learning from each other. Reciprocal reading occurred in several classes. Discussions were an important way of sharing personal experiences, information, expertise and knowledge, and happened regularly throughout the school day in all

classes. In several classes, students' were expected to seek and receive constructive writing feedback from their peers. Here, power was shared and students could learn from and be supported by each other, demonstrating ako (Berryman, 2013b). All teachers' used forms of feedback and feedforward with their students, where specific information about what has been done well and what could be improved upon, was provided.

This school's tuakana-teina programme filled an important role in creating a safe environment for students, by embedding and practising the school values. Staff reported that the younger students' felt safe and cared for, while the older students' felt valued and respected. This tuakana-teina relationship was demonstrated in all school-wide activities and during break times. Such relational and culturally responsive practices are likely to lead to positive learning experiences for both groups, resulting in positive identities as learners (Berryman, 2013b).

In Bishop and Berryman's (2006) study, students identified the most influential factor in their ability to achieve, was the relationships they had with their teachers. The principal acknowledged the student talent show was a missed opportunity to demonstrate ako, where knowledge and expertise could have been shared with others. Being conscious is the first step to making changes.

Identity, Language and Culture Count

The link between achievement and well-being has been identified (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Māori students do best when they see themselves and their identity, language and culture in daily practices of our education system (Ministry of Education, 2019c).

Kapa haka is a unique part of New Zealand's identity and is believed to contribute to social cohesion, positive health and educational outcomes (Pihama et al., 2014). As mentioned earlier, kapa haka was compulsory for all students in this school. Through these sessions, students were exposed to; Māori legends, te reo, protocols and traditions; as well as collaboration to achieve a common goal. MoE (2017b) acknowledged that students' identity is enhanced when educators are responsive to their cultural ways of knowing and being, and when their home languages and cultures

are being valued at school. Kapa haka was integrated into the school programme and indicated Maori culture being valued. The principal reported an improvement in students' respect for Māori culture and te reo through kapa haka, and they had fun. Kapa haka promoted passion, unity and commitment, where students stepped up to support each other. Those with strengths gained success through their confidence and/or leadership roles. Students gained a better understanding of te ao Māori, serving to enhance Māori identity. Its contribution could be considered an authentic vehicle to revitalise and retain te reo and tikanga (Pihama et al., 2014).

To some extent, Māori culture was valued and contributed to positive relationships with the Māori school community. Aspects of Māori History and traditions, including the Treaty of Waitangi and Matariki, were engaged with annually, with whānau invited to share knowledge and expertise. Infrequent events such as; visiting a marae, pōwhiri, and school hāngi had occurred, which could be understood by Māori students and whānau as steps toward cultural responsiveness.

A powerful marker of our shared identity and nation is speaking and understanding te reo Māori (Apanui, 2018). In this school, te reo Māori was actively being taught in less than half the classes. This is problematic, as students' perceived value of te reo, and the retention of the language, will be poor. Most teachers acknowledged the importance of te reo and expressed a desire to learn however, they lacked the confidence to teach it; nevertheless, teachers reported students enjoyed and were positive toward learning te reo. Although, one teacher suggested, "if you're not fluent in Māori, you are doing more dis-service trying". Such barriers towards teaching te reo, are unhelpful to Māori students and will require a concerted effort at management level to overcome. All teachers felt they needed help to implement an effective te reo Māori programme, as most felt they lacked the required knowledge. Employing a specialist te reo teacher to teach both teachers and students was under consideration, by the management. The management team acknowledged that there was still work to do to deliver te reo successfully. To fulfil the MoE's requirements to teach te reo Māori, professional development is needed to promote skills, knowledge and motivate teachers; as Māori language is critical for the crown to meet the obligations of the Treaty (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Wano (2014) determines that te reo should be taught, not just

because it is a Treaty principle, but because the language needs to survive. MoE (2012) asserts that by learning te reo and becoming familiar with tikanga, Māori students identity will be strengthened, while non-Māori move toward shared cultural understandings. All who learn te reo Māori help secure its future, and come to appreciate that the key to unity is diversity (Ministry of Education, 2012). The importance of Māori identity, language and culture should not be underestimated, as it recognises, acknowledges and validates Māori students as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Berryman et al. (2014) advocate that identity, language and culture do count, and Māori students benefit from seeing their experiences and knowledge reflected in teaching and learning. Therefore, without access to te reo Māori, students are missing out on benefits te reo has to offer, and an opportunity to strengthen their identity.

The provision for enhancing Māori identity, language and culture was present in the school Charter and cultural diversity was a school guiding principle. The 2019 school ERO report suggested that whole school kapa haka and bicultural contexts for learning had enabled a sense of pride and belonging for these Māori students. The staff were committed to implementing cultural diversity and supporting kapa haka. This was good but not enough, the Charter was missing crucial elements, such as critical consciousness and te ao Māori.

Productive Partnerships

MoE (2013a) describes a productive partnership as "a two-way relationship, leading to and generating shared action, outcomes and solutions" (p. 18) based on mutual respect. For the Ka Hikitia strategy to be successful, it is vital for stakeholders (Māori students, whānau, hapū, iwi and educators) to form partnerships, where knowledge and expertise is shared to produce better mutual outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Evidence of regular engagement with whānau at this school was clear. Frequent hui were held, where ideas were shared and cultural activities organised, resulting in extended whānau participating in school cultural activities and events. These events undoubtedly enhanced the relationship between the school and Māori whānau. The whānau group was a strong group that also met independently of the school. With the school refraining from formal meetings and imposing their expectations and values, communication remained open. Hui was an important part of working collaboratively and power-

sharing. Having attended these meetings, I saw first-hand the transformation that was possible when power and control is shared. M. Durie (2006) suggests a powerful motivating factor occurs when control and ownership of what is learned, how and when it is learned, is held by whānau and students, transforming school from an *obligatory activity* to a *sought after activity*. To develop this power-sharing, the school was keen to have a whānau group representative on the BOT, to create space for the aspirations of Māori communities to become more visible in the school's decision-making. The group were working to find a representative to fill this role at the time of writing. While there is no Māori representative, all students may be missing out. To fulfil the promises of Ka Hikitia and to work toward equity, filling this position without delay would be desirable.

It is important to remember that while educational institutions are major contributors to the revitalisation of Māori culture and te reo, whānau will primarily be the carrier of culture, whānau knowledge and cultural world views (M. Durie, 2006). Therefore, it is in the best interests of educators to work in partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi to enhance learning for Māori students. If the focus is shifted from being responsive *to* the culture of others; to developing and being part of cultural relationships *with* others, it legitimizes the aspects of culture that are fundamental to the identity and well-being of all people (Berryman et al., 2018). It is critical for school leaders, teachers and parents to get to know who those tribal entities (iwi, hapū) are because the school is based in a tribal area that has a tribal history, whakapapa and stories, that can add value to the curriculum (Wano, 2014). This school valued, and maintained strong relationships with whānau, however, they were keen to expand this to include hapū and iwi. The school acknowledged that this would be the start of a reciprocal relationship, and not just one-sided where the school 'use' the marae facilities and exploit hapū hospitality, but instead, build a shared relationship where invitations to school events and performances would occur. As mentioned earlier, this relationship had been difficult, as most of the school whānau group were from outside regions and without close links to local hapū, however, with continual change happening in schools, this is likely to change. A critical factor underpinning Ka Hikitia is strong engagement and contributions

from parents, whānau, hapū and iwi (Ministry of Education, 2013a). This school was working to connect and ultimately build a whanaungatanga type relationship.

Teachers welcomed parental involvement and the school had an 'open door' policy. School driven communication with whānau occurred in many ways, such as formal interviews, student-led conferences, emails, text messages and computer apps as well as less formal interactions such as; at sports events and the car park. The school actively included parents to share student's progress and had a high level of attendance at formal parent-teacher interviews. Parents who did not attend were directly approached, encouraging them to feel valued and connected with their child's learning. Such formal forms of correspondence served to communicate student's progress, but to form whanaungatanga type relationships, a deeper level of communication is required. One teacher spoke of building a relationship with a parent in the school car park, where that parent felt more comfortable, which is admirable, however, such school driven relationships, Lawson (2003) describes as school-centric. This is when schools are the main focus, and parent involvement is focused on activities like; children's academic achievement, parent-teacher conferences, classroom help, field trips, and participation in parent-teacher association meetings. Lawson (2003) describes school-centric activities, as those designed to fulfil the school's purpose, instead of the needs or aspirations of whānau. The majority of this school's communication with whānau could be considered school-centric, except for whānau hui, where ideas and aspirations of the group were able to be realised. The MoE (2013a) maintains productive partnerships "require understanding and acknowledgement of the value of Māori identity, language and culture, and the aspirations of Māori" (p. 18). Lawson (2003) warns, that it can be detrimental "when schools do not recognise racial and cultural issues" (p. 82). The whānau group hui is a place where whanaungatanga type relationships were more likely to develop.

The value of connectedness was strongly held by most staff members. Teachers and leaders must be challenged to reflect on the nature of relationships for learning under Ka Hikitia (Berryman et al., 2018). These teachers believed in making genuine connections with students and whānau. One teacher spoke of recognising the whole child, not just academic successes; another spoke of knowing students' ancestry

(whakapapa). This is in line with Berryman, Lawrence, & Lamont's (2018) thinking, who argue when establishing a relationship for learning, it is essential to focus on student's cultural identity, as well as physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, rather than solely on academic success. Berryman and colleagues contend that cultural relationships involve understanding whakapapa and knowing who learners are, as students' cultural experiences and prior knowledge is the foundation to students' identity as learners (Poutama Pounamu, n.d.). The ERO found this school had a deliberate focus on values and traditions, contributing to a strong sense of community for students and their families.

The Charter emphasised developing meaningful relationships with the Māori community. Whānau and community partnerships featured in the strategic plan. A goal was to develop an inclusive school culture where whānau and community partnerships were nurtured and strengthened. Included in the schools vision was 'unity' (kotahitanga) and 'inclusive' (manakitanga), both of which promoted productive partnerships. The strategic goal and vision were in line with Ka Hikitia, however, without strategies, impact and ongoing reviews of the impact, this goal and vision are unlikely to be realised. Another school guiding principle was 'community engagement', where community involvement in students' learning was an expectation. At the time of writing, the school curriculum was under review, to ensure that it recognised the unique position of Māori within New Zealand society. It was expected that through Māori community hui, focus would be on what Māori students success would look like in this school, so the curriculum could be responsive to their learners. This school was working towards strengthening partnerships with their community, where there was an ongoing exchange of knowledge and information. It is essential that within the concept of partnership, school leaders and teachers understand their part in either perpetuating or disrupting traditional power relationships (Berryman et al., 2018). It was clear the Ka Hikitia guiding principle of productive partnerships was not yet fully realised.

Critical Factors

Ka Hikitia tells us that two critical factors make the biggest difference to Māori student achievement. The first includes quality provision, leadership, teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2013a). This leadership team placed strong emphasis on quality

teaching, backed up by regular staff professional development in curriculum areas. Professionals are contracted to educate staff in up-to-date methods, reinforced by appropriate resourcing and ongoing professional learning. Careful tracking of students' progress was backed up with extra assistance when required, to accelerate learning. ERO found this school to be working towards equitable and excellent outcomes for all students in its 2019 report.

The second critical factor is strong engagement and contribution from students and those who are best placed to support them; parents, families and whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and businesses (Ministry of Education, 2013a). The curriculum delivery at this school was very student-focused and needs-based. It had a variety of options available to engage and work with parents to inform and/or discuss student progress. These included formal, informal, written and electronic methods. The staff regularly made use of these options to keep parents informed on their child's learning. Making these connections and building a relationship with hapū and iwi take time and commitment. The critical factors were evident in the school Charter, both in the strategic goals and guiding principles.

How effectively do the management and staff incorporate the vision and principles into school planning and data collection?

School attendance is important as it allows access to the curriculum. The international survey PISA (May, Jang-Jones, & McGregor, 2019) highlighted accessing curriculum content as one of the strongest drivers of achievement (Ministry of Education, 2017a). For Ka Hikitia to be effective and for these critical factors to be met, regular attendance is crucial. Students are less likely to succeed in their learning if they have high absenteeism, and absenteeism could be an early indicator of problems with student motivation or effective teaching (Ministry of Education, 2011a). Māori student attendance at this school followed national trends, of being lower compared to New Zealand European students. Although the numbers of Māori students with moderate and chronic absences was only 5, this school was not complacent. In line with Ka Hikitia, they proactively worked with whānau to understand and minimise absenteeism, with strong relationships being key to improved attendance (Ministry of Education, 2011a).

To realise the vision of Ka Hikitia, it was essential achievement disparities were addressed early, to reduce students falling behind and disengaging in the early years of their education (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Since the implementation of Ka Hikitia, there have been some attitude changes toward Māori language and culture in education, however, to achieve success Māori students still need to overcome barriers and challenges that their non-Māori counterparts do not experience to the same degree (Berryman & Eley, 2017a). Regular assessment allows early identification of academic needs, allowing these to be addressed before the negative consequences of falling behind compound (Ministry of Education, 2013a). At this school, regular assessments and clear tracking allowed early identification of those requiring assistance. This assistance was aimed at accelerating academic progress, so the child could reach their potential, which is in line with the Māori potential approach. However, aspects of te ao Māori were rarely part of this intervention, making it unlikely to achieve the vision of Ka Hikitia.

The 2019 ERO report, indicated that the overall reading and writing achievement had improved for Māori students since the previous report, however, significant disparity remained for Māori students in reading and mathematics. Further improvements were required for Māori students to reach equality with their New Zealand European peers. This suggested that other factors may also need addressing.

Overall, how well is this strategy implemented as recommended by the Ministry of Education?

Ka Hikitia was a policy with a lot of promise, with well-intentioned teachers keen to raise Māori student achievement and to implement such an initiative, but this did not happen for a variety of reasons. The Auditor-General report determined that the implementation of the first phase of Ka Hikitia was limited by a slow and unsteady introduction by the MoE, with ineffective communication with schools, as well as confusion over the delivery; resulting in Ka Hikitia not being given priority and being less effective than it could have been (Office of the Auditor-General, 2013). Consequently, Ka Hikitia was not well understood by the educators at this school, resulting in ineffective implementation. It is probable that other schools would also have had trouble implementing Ka Hikitia as it was intended. This is concerning for a generation

of Māori students who are not yet having their needs met and able to 'enjoy education success as Māori'.

What are the overall implications

Through the research, it was apparent that many of the management team and teachers did not fully understand the term 'as Māori' in the Ka Hikitia vision statement. This was problematic, as without this understanding the Ka Hikitia strategy, it was unlikely to be implemented as well as it could. Gaining an understanding of living 'as Māori', as defined by M. Durie (2003) included access to te ao Māori, Māori language and cultural practices. These needed to be embedding into everyday school life.

To fully implement the Treaty principle, would involve the staff at this school to build strong whanaungatanga relationships between the school and whānau, hapū and iwi. Without these strong relationships, the school is unlikely to benefit from all the Māori community has to offer, but more importantly, Māori students may miss out on truly belonging and achieving and succeeding 'as Māori'. Māori whānau need to feel they belong and are part of the school because they are connected to the student and should be viewed and treated as such (Ministry of Education, 2013a). To achieve this, a genuine reciprocal partnership needs to be established. This would include ensuring Māori are represented on the school BOT.

For these educators to be aware of the part they play in maintaining the status quo, or inequality for their Māori learners, they must practise critical consciousness. It is then that they can engage in practices that focus on more equitable reality for their students and bring about attitudinal changes (Ministry of Education, 2019c). Through this process, issues of power and privilege can be critically examined and challenged, to work towards equity for all (G. Smith, 2003).

This school demonstrated quality leadership and governance, in line with the first critical factor for success, and maintained strong engagement from students and their whānau, in line with the second critical factor. However, this would be strengthened by including strong engagement with hapū, iwi and community.

The planning documentation was in place to successfully implement the Ka Hikitia strategy in this school. Appropriate literacy and numeracy data was collected by the

school to inform the management team and teachers, of students academic needs in these areas. Māori student data was segregated to allow for easy identification of students requiring extra assistance or programmes to accelerate academic success. The Treaty was evident throughout the Charter, and the position of Māori was considered fairly through the policies and funding.

Although ERO found that Māori students at this school had made significant academic progress since 2017, further improvements were still required for them to reach parity with their peers.

These findings suggest that the management team and teachers did not fully understand the Ka Hikitia vision and the implications of all the guiding principles, and therefore were unable to implement it as the MoE had intended. Issues with poor nationwide implementation and lack of MoE support were unhelpful (Office of the Auditor-General, 2013).

This School's Progress Towards Achieving the Vision of Ka Hikitia

This chapter has highlighted and summarised the key findings of this research project alongside the reviewed literature. The findings have been discussed in relation to the research questions, and learnings presented about the way Ka Hikitia vision and guiding principles have been understood and implemented in this school. Common themes emerged and areas that need addressing have been highlighted.

The understanding of 'as Māori' in the vision statement confused the majority of staff at this school and likely, educators in other schools would also find the term confusing. If the vision is understood, it is more likely it will be implemented as it was intended. M. Durie's (2003) definition of being able to live 'as Māori' embraces access to 'te ao Māori', the Māori worldview, encompassing access to language, culture, marae, tikanga and resources. Professional development around te ao Māori would be advisable, to ensure the staff understand the term, 'as Māori', as until they do, it is unlikely that Ka Hikita will be embedded into this school.

It was obvious that this staff cared about their students. Building strong whanaungatanga relationships with their students was highlighted throughout the

study. Building relationships with whānau was also prevalent. The partnerships with parents although well-intentioned could be considered largely school-centric. The next step on this journey would be to build relationships with hapū and iwi. This was in its early stages and a priority for the management team.

This school was proud of kapa haka in their school, and the cultural learnings that came from it. A lot of effort went into lesson preparation and delivery to include culturally significant events, such as the Treaty of Waitangi and Matariki. The next step was to embed te ao Māori and cultural practices into everyday school life.

The staff worked hard to achieve the best possible academic achievements for all their students, with regular professional development in different learning areas, and assistance given to struggling students. Teachers' believed in their student's potential and encouraged them to believe in themselves. To realise the Māori potential approach, support is required from many parties (Ministry of Education, 2009a), however, the most critical factor in student achievement was the relationship between student and teacher (Cummins, 2001; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). When creating programmes to accelerate success for Māori students, it is critical to include Māori models of learning, such as the Māori potential approach and ako, as well as those identified in the effective teaching profile (Bishop & Berryman, 2009). These Māori models of learning have proven successful for Māori students to succeed as Māori (Bishop et al., 2007b). Focusing on Māori students' potential enables educators to shift the discourse from marginalisation, oppression and deficit thinking, to a discourse where their potential is realised as Māori, and as global citizens (Anderson, 2018).

The new MoE initiative Te Hurihanganui provides hope, that through significant action, transformative reform of the education system for the betterment of Māori student can be achieved. Embracing the principles of this initiative would see Māori potential enhanced. To embed such principles, educators must engage in critical consciousness, recognise and analyse systems of inequality, and be committed to taking action to address them (El-Amin, et al., 2017). However, for this initiative to make the difference as intended, it will require more than well-intentioned leaders and teachers. For those teachers who were not well-intentioned, but instead, were satisfied with the status quo with a bit of kapa haka on the side, the professional development and implementation

process of Te Hurihanganui will be of utmost importance to achieve the benefits intended.

Ka Hikitia was intended to disrupt the education system, and challenge the inequalities and disparities that emerged from our history. As part of the Treaty of Waitangi, educators have a responsibility to contribute to accelerating the success of Māori students. Through this research, I have found that this school is missing some vital elements to realise the benefits of Ka Hikitia and to achieve critical education reform. Critical consciousness and recognising and encouraging te ao Māori to flourish in classrooms and the school, are essential to realising all Ka Hikitia has to offer.

The Auditor-General's report highlighted the flaws in the implementation of Ka Hikita, resulting in it not being given the priority, nor being as effective, as it should have been (Office of the Auditor-General, 2013). Many educators did not understand Ka Hikitia well, impeding the implementation process. Subsequently, many Māori students continue to miss out on 'enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori' (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Chapter Six – Conclusion

Ngā tapuwae o mua, mo muri

Footsteps of the past, to guide the future

Introduction

This thesis has examined how a New Zealand full primary school responded to and implemented the government strategy Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). This chapter presents the concluding remarks, outlining the implications for, why Ka Hikita is needed; our moral obligation to address education debt; the need for engagement in conscientisation; the importance of understanding Ka Hikita, why planning and documentation is not enough; and finally, why the implementation process requires change. This is followed by identified limitations within the study and suggestions of opportunities for further research. It closes with concluding statements.

Concluding Remarks

The education system has underserved Māori learners for many years, with various factors contributing to this underperformance. Many of these factors stem from racism and bias, conscious or unconscious, inherent in our system (Ministry of Education, 2019b). Ka Hikitia is a policy that has the potential to make a difference.

We have a moral obligation to address the intergenerational education debt that has accumulated over time. We have a history of well-intentioned teachers and school leaders who have tried their hardest to improve academic outcomes for Māori students, although little has changed. Instead of focussing on the achievement gap, our focus should be on reducing the debt, by changing what is being done, including behaviours and attitudes (Berryman et al., 2016b), as the minds and actions of teachers' are major influences on Māori students' educational achievements (Bishop, 2005) and contribute to the fabric of our society.

Educators need to move beyond their level of comfort to reach a place where they can critically examine school procedures and any conscious or unconscious bias that may be held, by recognising and analysing systems of inequality and taking action to address

them (El-Amin, et al., 2017). Engagement in conscientisation is required to challenge and disrupt traditional assumptions (G. Smith, 2003) and bring about transformative praxis.

Schools' have planning and documentation in place to implement Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a), however, that is not enough. The initiative needs to be well understood. Educators need to know how it will look, feel and sound in their school, and partner with whanau, hapū and iwi, before effective implementation can occur.

The Ka Hikitia policy had a lot of promise, however, after eight years; due to a lack of understanding and poor implementation the outcomes for many Māori students have not changed. Before another policy for Māori is ushered into schools, policymakers must learn from the past and make the necessary changes, to ensure implementation issues are resolved, so the policy can be realised as it was intended.

Limitations and Areas of Further Research

Much can be learned from a case study, however, as they are bounded and focus on a single case, the issue of generalizability is highlighted. These findings are specific to this school, so cannot be generalized to the general population.

A possible area for further research could be to expand the sample to include Māori students and whānau, to obtain their perspectives on the way Ka Hikita's vision and guiding principles are implemented in the school.

Another possibility is to study a school identified as effectively implementing the guiding principles and critical factors, and realising the vision of Ka Hikita accelerating success 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013a). It could provide evidence-based strategies that other schools could employ or develop, to improve implementation in their school.

Conclusion

This research has provided an insight into how one school understood and implemented the Ka Hikitia strategy. Findings indicated that this school had the best intentions, but did not understand the policy. Ka Hikitia was a well-worded policy, that was poorly implemented and not well supported by the MoE (Office of the Auditor-General, 2016b).

With the lack of understanding in many schools, it was no surprise that this school struggled to implement Ka Hikita as it was intended.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Invitation letter to Principal

330 Te Rapa Rd

Beerescourt

Hamilton

Tēnā koe

My name is Mary Evans and I am currently undertaking research to complete my Masters of Educational thesis at the University of Waikato. As part of this project, I would like to invite your staff to participate. Participation in the project is voluntary and potential participants will be reassured that there will be no impact on professional relationships as a result of their participation, or if they decline to participate, or if they withdraw of the project. Participation will involve talking with me about their understanding of the policy document Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 and the ways in which they implement aspects of it into their classroom/school programme.

Accompanying this letter is an 'Information Sheet' that will give you some basic information about the project and what would be involved if you agree to participate. Please take time to read it so that you will be comfortable with and aware of the process and the details of the research. I am happy to answer any questions you may have to help clarify the process.

The overall aim of the research is to investigate the understanding and implementation of the vision and principles outlined in the Ministry of Education's document Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017. It is hoped that information provided by your staff will be of benefit to others, to ultimately improve outcomes for Māori students.

I would like to run a staff meeting of approximately one hour, to introduce the document Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 to the staff as a group, before conducting individual interviews. This would serve to find out what the staff as a group, understand by the five guiding principles in Ka Hikitia. To achieve this we would do a 'bus stop' group activity. This would involve rotating around each principle in small groups, writing down relevant happens in their class and the school. The second part of the activity would be to think of the next steps to achieving these principles further and record these on paper. These would then be shared as a

group. This would serve two purposes; firstly; getting participants to think about Ka Hikitia prior to interviewing them, will help orientate their thinking into their own practice, so when they are interviewed, they will know what these principles are, giving me the best possible chance of obtaining relevant data. Secondly; to help the participants feel more comfortable in the interview process because they will know they have something to contribute. This is in line with the kaupapa Māori approach.

Each participant will be involved in an interview that will take approximately 40 minutes. Management team will be interviewed as a group, which will take approximately an hour. If the participants agree, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. I will transcribe these from the recordings. Prior to the interview, participants will be given a copy of the interview questions, allowing them time to consider their responses to ensure rich data. In these interviews, participants will be asked to respond to questions regarding their understandings and their classroom/school practice. At the completion of transcribing these interviews, the participants will be given a copy of the transcripts to review for approximately two weeks and any amendments will be made. A confirmation email will be sort from each participant, before beginning analysis of data.

I am very grateful for the time and thought that you will be giving to assist with this research.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you require further clarification.

Ngā mihi

Mary Evans

yram11.me@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Elizabeth Eley elizabeth.eley@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix B – Informed Consent Form for the Principal

Please sign this form to protect <u>your</u> privacy and interests

Ka Hikitia Research Project

Researcher: Mary Evans

NAME:

1. CONSENT

a) I, …… agree for my school and staff to be involved in the research being conducted on, Investigating the understanding and implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand primary school, being completed as a partial requirement for a Masters of Education degree.

b) As part of this research, I agree for the researcher to hold a staff meeting with my staff including myself, to introduce the policy document Ka Hikitia to the group. This staff meeting would involve a 'bus stop' group activity, to find out what the staff as a group understand by the five guiding principles in Ka Hikitia. Copies of these may be retained by you for further staff development.

c) The second part of the project would be to interview staff members.

d) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the research project above and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

e) I agree to take part in the research project outlined on the information sheet.

f) I understand that participation is voluntary, and no staff member will be coerced into taking part.

g) Participants involved in individual interviews will have an opportunity to read and approve their interview transcript before data analysis begins. Participants involved in group interviews, will not be able to make individual changes, because each contribution is contingent on previous contributions. A confirmation email will be sort from each participant, before beginning analysis of data.

h) Participants may withdraw at any time up until they have approved their transcript or data analysis begins, without giving a reason. This can be done verbally or in writing to the researcher or her supervisor.

2. ACCESS

I agree that interview transcripts will be made available to the researcher conducting this study for the purpose of her Masters study and she may use the analysis in conference presentations and any resulting publications.

I understand if I wish to obtain a digital copy of the thesis, I can access this through the University of Waikato, Research Commons and that it is accessible to the public to read.

3. STORAGE

I agree that any recordings of interviews and transcripts will be held in a secure filing cabinet at the home of the researcher or on a password-protected computer, during the course of the project. On completion of the project, the transcripts will be archived.

4. PUBLICATION

I agree that the interview transcripts and data gathered may be quoted, or shown in full or in part in published work; and may be used for future research publications, and/or presentations.

5. ANONYMITY

Pseudonyms will be used throughout the project to help protect against revealing the participant's identity. Please note that *while every effort will be made to protect* the *anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.*

6. COPYRIGHT

This research will meet the copyright conditions of both the University of Waikato and any subsequent publisher.

7. CONCERNS

I understand that if I have any concerns about the research, I can contact the researcher Mary Evans in the first instance, or her supervisor, Elizabeth Eley.

Researcher: Mary Evans Date: _____ Signature: _____

Principal:_____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix C – Information sheet

Investigating the understanding and implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand primary school - Information sheet

What do management and teaching staff understand by the vision statement and principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success? Does the school planning documentation and data support the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success?

Researcher: Mary Evans

This project is part of a Masters thesis being undertaken in the Division of Education at the University of Waikato. The University of Waikato, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, has approved this research project.

The education gap between indigenous Māori students and their non-Māori peers has been identified and analysed. The causes and solutions continue to be debated. The Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success strategy has been put in place to guide action, to make a significant difference for Māori students in education.

I would like to invite you to take part in an interview in which you will be asked about your understandings and practices of the Ka Hikitia vision and principles. Participation is voluntary and it is not obligatory to participate. It is anticipated that the individual interviews will take approximately 40 minutes, group interviews will take approximately 60 minutes. Transcripts will then be created of the interviews.

Using the information obtained through the interview process, I intend to investigate the thinking and practices around the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia. I will also view the school planning documentation to see what is in place to support the vision and principles of Ka Hikitia; as well as associated data such as achievement, attendance and wellbeing.

The master copies of the interview transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer if in digital form, or they will be stored in a secure filing cabinet at my home if in hard copy. No one apart from my supervisor and myself will have access to them. They will be stored for the duration of the research. On completion of the project, transcripts will be archived for at least five years. If you are interviewed individually, you will have the opportunity to review and amend your interview transcript prior to my analysis of the data. If you are part of a group interview, individual changes cannot be made, because each contribution is contingent on

previous contributions. However, you will have access to my findings after they have been written and prior to publication.

The name and location of the school that you work in will not be disclosed, and a pseudonym will be used so your name will not be disclosed in this research. Every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of all participants, but please be aware that, although every effort will be made, anonymity can not be fully guaranteed as those familiar with the school site may be able to deduce the school.

An electronic copy of the thesis will become widely available through the University of Waikato Research Commons.

I would like to use the data collected in this research as the central data for my Masters thesis and other possible academic publication/presentations.

If you take part in this research, you have the right to:

- withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason. This can be done verbally or in writing, to my supervisor or myself.
- To take any complaints that you have about the process, in the first instance to my supervisor: Elizabeth Eley (details below).

I will be in contact with you within the next week, to see if you are willing to take part in this project. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact either me or my supervisor via the contact details below.

Mary Evans

yram11.me@gmail.com

Supervisor: Elizabeth Eley

elizabeth.eley@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix D– Letter of invitation to participants.

330 Te Rapa Rd

Beerescourt

Hamilton

Tēnā koe

My name is Mary Evans and I am currently undertaking research to complete my Masters of Educational thesis at the University of Waikato. As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in my study. This will involve talking with me about your understanding of the policy document Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 and the ways in which you implement aspects of it into your classroom/school programme.

Accompanying this letter is an 'Information Sheet' that will give you some basic information about the project and what would be involved if you agree to participate. Please take time to read it so that you will be aware of the process and comfortable with the details of the research. I am happy to answer any questions you may have to help clarify the process.

The overall aim of the research is to investigate the understanding and implementation of the vision and principles outlined in the Ministry of Education's document Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017. It is hoped that information you provide will be of benefit to others, to ultimately improve outcomes for Māori students.

I am happy to meet with you at a time and place that is suitable. I will provide you with a copy of the questions for you to consider prior to our meeting. I anticipate the individual interviews to take approximately 40 minutes and the group interviews to take approximately 60 minutes. Please note that participation in the project is voluntary and please be reassured that there will be no impact on professional relationships as a result of your participation, or if you decline to participate, or withdraw of the project. Thank you for your consideration. If you choose to participate, I will be very grateful for the time and thought that you will be giving to assist with this research.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you require further clarification.

Ngā mihi, Mary Evans yram11.me@gmail.com

Supervisor: Elizabeth Eley elizabeth.eley@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix E – Informed consent form

Please sign this form to protect <u>your</u> privacy and interests

Ka Hikitia Research Project

Researcher: Mary Evans

NAME ……

1. CONSENT

a) I, …… agree to be involved in the research being conducted on, Investigating the Understanding and Implementation of Ka Hikitia, in a New Zealand Primary School, being completed as a partial requirement for a Masters of Education degree.

b) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the research project above and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

c) I agree to take part in the research project outlined on the information sheet.

d) I understand that my participation is voluntary, and if I am interviewed individually, I will have an opportunity to read and approve my interview transcript before data analysis begins. If I am part of a group interview, individual changes cannot be made, because each contribution is contingent on previous contributions. I may withdraw up until my transcript has been approved or data analysis begins, without giving a reason. This can be done verbally or in writing to the researcher or her supervisor.

e)A confirmation email will be sort from each participant, before beginning analysis of data.

f) Participants may withdraw at any time up until they have approved their transcript or data analysis begins, without giving a reason. This can be done verbally or in writing to the researcher or her supervisor.

2. ACCESS

I agree that interview transcripts will be made available to the researcher conducting this study for the purpose of her Masters study and she may use the analysis in conference presentations and any resulting publications.

I understand if I wish to obtain a digital copy of the thesis, I can access this through the University of Waikato, Research Commons and that it is accessible to the public to read.

3. STORAGE

I agree that any recordings of interviews and transcripts will be held in a secure filing cabinet at the home of the researcher or on a password-protected computer, during the course of the project. On completion of the project, the transcripts will be archived.

4. PUBLICATION

I agree that the interview transcripts and data gathered may be quoted, or shown in full or in part in published work; and may be used for future research publications, and/or presentations.

5. ANONYMITY

Pseudonyms will be used throughout the project to help protect against revealing the participant's identity. Please note that *while every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.*

6. COPYRIGHT

This research will meet the copyright conditions of both the University of Waikato and any subsequent publisher.

7. CONCERNS

I understand that if I have any concerns about the research, I can contact the researcher Mary Evans in the first instance, or her supervisor, Elizabeth Eley.

Researcher: Mary Evans Date: _____ Signature: _____

Participant: _____Date: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix F – Interview questions for management team

Māori language in education is critical for the Crown to meet its Treaty of Waitangi obligations to strengthen and protect the Māori language.

1. Can you tell me some of the things you do in your school to support the teaching of Māori language?
2. Do you offer your staff support to improve their teaching of te reo Māori? If so, can you tell me about that support?
3. What ways are student's identity, language and culture integrated into your school?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding Māori language or culture in your school?

Ka Hikitia outlines that in primary education, all Māori students should have strong literacy, numeracy and language skills.

5. What does your school do to promote achievement in literacy, numeracy and language skills for Māori students?
6. What methods of feedback and feedforward do you promote in your school?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to teaching literacy, numeracy and language skills to Māori students?

Research has shown that students who expect and are expected to succeed, are more likely to succeed.

8. What do you do at your school, so that students' know what is expected of them?
9. What do you do to encourage Māori students at your school to believe in themselves?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to expectations of Māori students?

It has been recognised that the contribution of whānau, hapū and iwi are key to engaging students in education.

11. What do you do at your school to encourage students' whānau, hapū and/or iwi to contribute?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to contributions from whānau, hapū or iwi?

Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 is the Government's strategy to rapidly change how education performs so that all Māori students gain the skills, qualifications and knowledge they need to succeed and to be proud in knowing who they are as Māori. The vision is '*Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori*'.

13. What is your interpretation of '*Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori*'?
14. How do you know Māori students' are achieving at your School?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to Māori achievement?

Appendix G – Interview questions for teachers

Māori language in education is critical for the Crown to meet its Treaty of Waitangi obligations to strengthen and protect the Māori language.

1. Can you tell me what you do in your classroom to support the teaching of Māori language?
2. How do your students' respond to learning te reo Māori?
3. What ways are student's identity, language and culture integrated into your classroom?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding Māori language in schools?

Ka Hikitia outlines that in primary education, all Māori students should have strong literacy, numeracy and language skills.

5. Can you tell me what you do in your classroom to promote achievement in literacy, numeracy and language skills for your Māori students?
6. Can you tell me what methods of feedback and feedforward you use in your classroom?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to teaching literacy, numeracy and language skills to Māori students?

Research has shown that students who expect and are expected to succeed, are more likely to succeed.

8. Can you tell me about the sorts of things that happen in your classroom, so that students' know what is expected of them?
9. Can you tell me some of the ways you encourage Māori students in your class to believe in themselves?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to expectations of Māori students?

It has been recognised that the contribution of whānau, hapū and iwi are key to engaging students in education.

11. Can you tell me about anything you do in your classroom to encourage your students' whānau, hapū and/or iwi to contribute?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to contributions from whānau, hapū or iwi?

Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 is the Government's strategy to rapidly change how education performs so that all Māori students gain the skills, qualifications and knowledge they need to succeed and to be proud in knowing who they are as Māori. The vision is '*Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori*'.

13. Can you tell me your interpretation of '*Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori*'?
14. What sorts of things do you see in your classroom when Māori students' are achieving educational success as Māori?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add with regard to Māori enjoying and achieving as Māori?